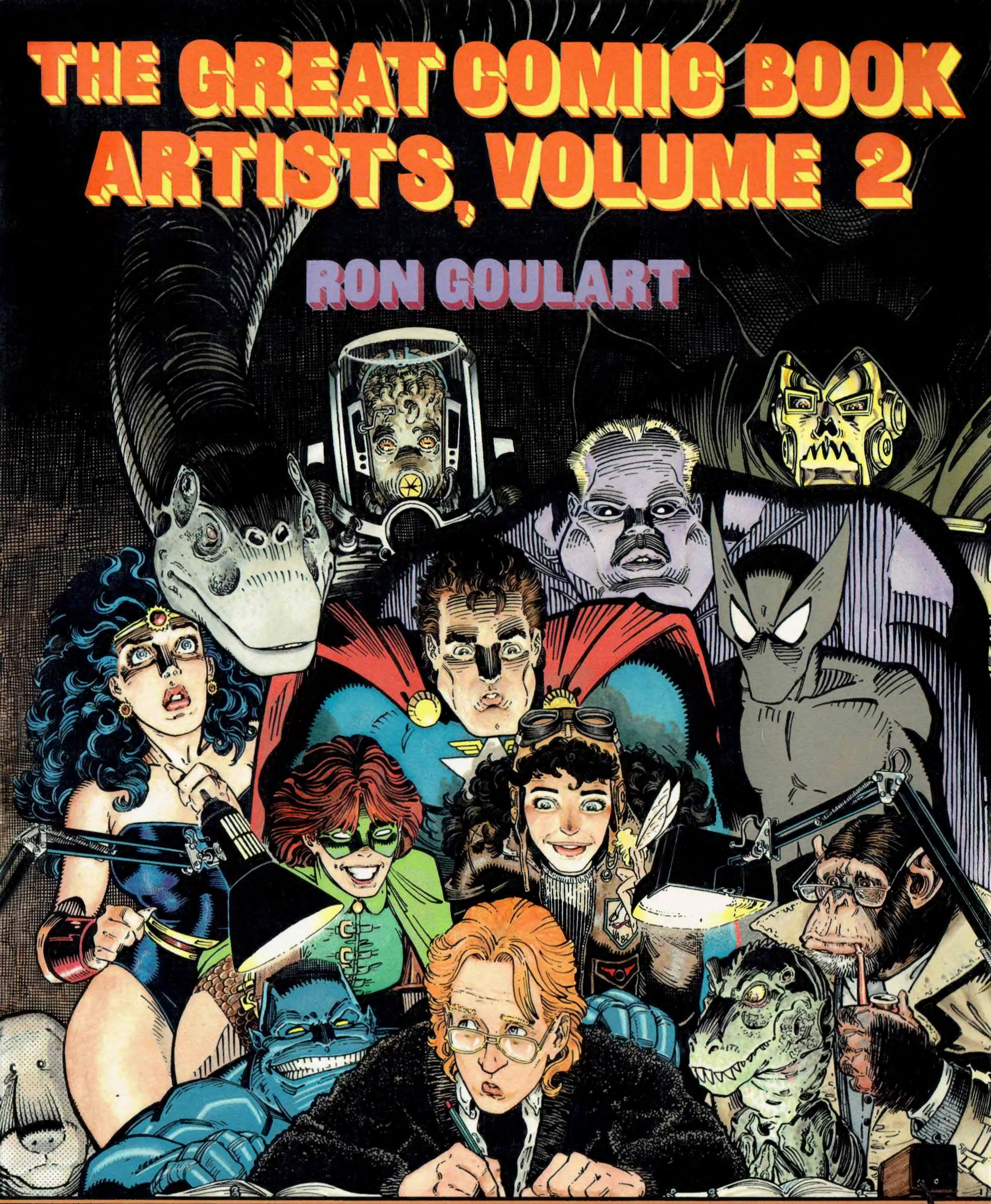
THE GREAT COMIC BOOK ARTISTS, VOLUME 2

RON GOULART



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VOLUME 2

INTRODUCTION

When the first volume in this series appeared two years ago, I advised readers who didn't find one of their particular favorites included to be patient. There were certainly enough good comic book artists, past and present, to fill at least another book, and with any luck there'd be one. Happily, we're back with another group of gifted graphic storytellers.

As before, you'll find a mixture of cartoonists—those who practiced their trade back in the days when comic books were a brand-new newsstand phenomenon; those who have broken into the field within the past few years; and those who came along at some point in between.

Artists have been included in this book for a variety of reasons, mostly objective. First off, there are those who, because of conspicuous ability or historical importance, can't be left out. Then there are award winners and fan favorites. Finally there are a few purely subjective choices—cartoonists I feel have done exceptional work in what still remains, despite increasing attention, an ephemeral field. I believe these artists deserve to have at least a sample of their work preserved from oblivion.

After the first volume appeared, one noted artist wrote me to express his dissatisfaction at being excluded. Alas, as on the ark, there are only so many spaces. But I'm pleased that that particular artist is aboard for our second trip.

—Ron Goulart

ARTHUR ADAMS

He's been drawing professionally for only a few years, but Adams is already a fan favorite and a poll winner. In fact, he will probably turn out to be the most successful newcomer of the decade. His material started appearing in fanzines in the early 1980s. By 1984 he was drawing for Pacific Comics' *Alien Worlds,* and the following year he was hired by Marvel. Since 1985 he's drawn such major characters as the X-Men, Superman, Batman, and Gumby.

Adams was born in 1963, grew up in West Virginia, and currently resides in northern California. He's basically a self-taught artist. "I've never gone to school or anything," he told *Comics Interview,* "and things seem to be working out okay that way." He was influenced by Mike Golden's work on *The Micronauts,* Walt Simonson's art, and "just lots of people, movies, TV shows I've watched over the years. Just everything in my head comes out on the page in a hideous gob of lines."

He was tapped by Marvel in 1984, but the debut of his six-issue *Longshot* limited series didn't take place until 1985. In touting the series to *Amazing Heroes,* scriptwriter Ann Nocenti said of Adams's penciling, "The artwork speaks for itself. It's gorgeous. I'd give him a rough idea for a character, and when he gave me the drawing of the character, in a sense he had made the character alive."

Longshot is a complexly plotted science fiction/fantasy. Its blond young hero visits contemporary America from elsewhere and gets entangled in heavily mystical intrigue. Reviewing the initial issue for *Amazing Heroes,* R. A. Jones was not especially taken with the writing. Jones went on to say, however, *"Longshot* does have one major saving grace, and that is the penciling of Arthur Adams. I'm going to once again go out on my prophetic limb and predict that Art will soon become a fan favorite. He has a dynamic style that grabs your attention and won't let go. To be sure, he exhibits some of the weaknesses of any young artist, the occasional awkward pose or crude drawing—but as a first effort this is incredibly impressive. In fact, this limited series should be worth buying simply to watch the progress Adams makes from issue to issue."

Adams did progress, growing more assured. But even in the first issue of *Longshot* he acquitted himself well. His work is patient and meticulous, yet lively; and he shows himself capable of meeting all the challenges of the script. Many of his people tend to be lean, and there is a slight Victorian feeling to some of his panels.

Adams looks back on this 159-page, six-issue opus as an important part of his education. "Comics are, like, the best place to learn how to draw things," he's explained. "I'd never drawn a person smiling before *Longshot* #1. I'd never drawn a windmill; I'd never drawn a baby; and when you draw comics you have to draw backgrounds, you have to draw different-sized people, you have to draw emotions."

Adams next took turns with some established Marvel properties, working on the *X-Men Annual,* the *New Mutants Annual,* and the *Web of Spider Man Annual.* He also drew *Cloak and Dagger.* He considers all this part of his learning process. For DC he drew a story for *Batman* #4 and the entire *Action Comics Annual* #1, wherein Superman and Batman team up and encounter a sweet-faced young lady vampire and events grim enough to give even Stephen King the whimwhams.

In 1987, demonstrating his versatility, Adams produced a forty-page humor book for Comico. This was *Gumby's Summer Fun Adventure,* starring the likable little green cult figure. Initially reluctant to take on the project—"I'm going to be connected to Gumby all my life if I do this"—he was persuaded to do it when Bob Burden, of *Flaming Carrot* fame, was brought in to do the script. The book turned out to be "a lot of fun" for Adams and gave him a chance to demonstrate that he can handle funny stuff as well as heroics.

Since he is essentially a penciler, Adams has worked with several inkers, among them Dick Giordano, Whilce Portacio, and Terry Austin. The Gumby saga he inked himself. Adams has been pleased with his various co-workers and has said, "I've had good luck with inkers."

Among his current projects are a *Longshot* graphic novel and the cover of this book.

WHAT--!?!
WHERE AM I--?!?
WELCOME, MY DEAR, TO THY NEW HOME.
WHO--?!!
HUSH, ORORO.
BE THOU STILL IN MIND AND BODY...
... WITHIN THY CRYSTAL CHRYSALIS.
FURTHER, MY SLEEPING BEAUTY, LET THY RAIMENT BECOME THAT MORE SUITED TO A GODDESS.
THY FATE SHALL BE MADE PLAIN TO THEE, ANON-- WHEN LOKI'S FELL MAGICS HAVE ENSURED THAT THOU WILT EMBRACE IT, AS JOYFULLY AS THE FLOWER DOTH THE MORNING SUN.
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The New Mutants portrayed in Adams' cosmic style, Terry Austin embellisher.
Copyright © 1985 Marvel Comics Group.

MURPHY ANDERSON

A specialist in fantasy and science fiction, Anderson has been lauded as both an artist and an inker. He got into comic books as the Golden Age was waning and was a major figure in the Silver Age renaissance. Before he left the field he was associated with such characters as Batman, Adam Strange, Hawkman, and Green Lantern.

He was born in North Carolina in 1926 and from childhood was interested in comics and in drawing them. "*Buck Rogers* was the first big impression," he's recalled. "I was simply fascinated by the concept of *Buck Rogers,* and I made a great effort to get an out-of-town newspaper every week just to get Buck." He intended to major in art at the University of North Carolina, but when his favorite instructor, the illustrator/comic strip artist William Meade Prince, became ill after a few weeks, Anderson lost interest. He had started making trips to New York while still in high school, calling on assorted comic book publishers with his samples. He got encouragement, if no job offers, and was able to meet such idols as Lou Fine and Jack Cole. During World War II, certain he was going to be drafted, Anderson persuaded his father to finance him in an assault on Manhattan. "He thought it was a terrible idea, but he gave me a hundred dollars and said—this was at the end of my second quarter in college—he said when that was gone, that's it!"

Just before his money ran out Anderson dropped in at Fiction House and was hired on the spot. Appropriately enough for a youth who'd grown up in the twenty-fifth century with Buck Rogers, he did most of his early work for *Planet Comics.* His chief drawing assignment was *Star Pirate,* which mixed space opera and a touch of humor. Although Anderson was still in his teens, his pages had a professional look, and he made up in enthusiasm for what he lacked in technical skill.

Despite an eyesight problem, he entered the Navy in 1944. While stationed in the Chicago area, Anderson was able to drop in at the editorial offices of Ziff-Davis and get a few jobs doing illustrations for their *Amazing Stories* pulp. After the war, having married, he stayed on in Chicago and in 1947 began drawing the *Buck Rogers* daily strip. Doing Buck should have been a dream come true, except that the strip was no longer the success it had been in the 1930s and its list of papers had dwindled. "I started on that strip for $65 a week. Don't ask me why," Anderson once said. "I was making better money doing comic book work." Anderson remained with the science fiction strip until 1949, then decided to return to comic books. He was persuaded to try one more go-round with Buck in 1958 but abandoned him for good the next year.

The 1950s were a busy decade for him. "I decided to come back to New York," he's said, "since things seemed to be opening up." Ziff-Davis had set up an office in Manhattan to do comic books, and once again he was doing science fiction. He drew for *Amazing Adventures* and had a book of his own, *Lars of Mars.* Unfortunately, neither thrived. He also made the rounds of the other comic book publishers, of which there were several at that time. DC was among those interested, and Anderson commenced a long association with them in 1950.

As an artist he worked on both science fiction and superhero material—*Captain Comet, Hawkman, Atomic Knights, The Spectre,* et al. As an inker he was involved with some of the most popular DC features. Collaborating with Carmine Infantino, he was responsible for *Adam Strange* in the early 1960s. "He complemented Infantino's pencils," comments comics historian Joe Brancatelli of this *Mystery in Space* feature, "and together they produced the slickest, prettiest, and best received science-fiction strip of the era." The same team also took over Batman in the mid-1960s, producing what Brancatelli calls "a slicker, more pristine Batman than had ever been seen before." Anderson also inked Gil Kane's *Green Lantern* and *Atom.*

Gradually Anderson phased himself out of the comic book field and shifted into commercial art. For several years he produced the army's *P.S.* magazine, and today he runs Murphy Anderson Visual Concepts. He doesn't draw much anymore, but he says the color separation work his company does pays a good deal more than drawing comics ever did.

JET OFF, YOU SPACE GOONS! THAT'S MUTINY TALK! I'M RUNNING THIS SHIP AND I SAY NO! NOW GET BACK TO YOUR STATIONS!
BLAST YOU, HENTY! YOU WON'T STAND IN OUR WAY!
RUSH HIM! HE CAN ONLY RAY ONE OF US!
HIS GUN USELESS AT CLOSE QUARTERS, CAPTAIN HENTY STANDS ALONE AGAINST THE MUTINOUS ONSLAUGHT...
DUMP HIM, MEN! WE'LL TAKE OVER THE SHIP AND THE DIAMOND METEOR!
BRUTALLY, HENTY IS CAST OUT INTO THE ABYSMAL VOID!
THAT TAKES CARE OF HENTY! DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES! NOW SET COURSE FOR SPACEFORT!
ABANDONED IN EMPTY AIRLESS SPACE, MARK HENTY HAS ONLY FLEETING MINUTES TO LIVE BEFORE HIS STARVING LUNGS BRING CHOKING DEATH!
CAN'T BREATHE... I'M DONE FOR... I... CHOKE! GASP!
BUT THE GIRL REPORTER IS WITHIN RADAR RANGE...
WHAT IN THE UNIVERSE...? A MAN TUMBLING THROUGH SPACE BACK THERE! GOT TO REACH HIM FAST AT FULL ROCKET POWER!
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Murphy Anderson in a Buck Rogers mood. Copyright © 1985 Murphy Anderson.

SERGIO ARAGONES

Aragones first gained attention in this country as a doodler. That was in 1962, when his tiny pantomime cartoons began crawling around the margins of the pages of *Mad.* He was soon doing more ambitious projects, and he subsequently produced a number of books. Aragones has worked in animation and as a comedy actor on television. More recently he has created a barbarian hero who may someday eclipse the likes of Conan and Red Sonja.

Aragones was born in Spain in 1937 and grew up in Mexico City. He studied both architecture and mime. A compulsive cartoonist from childhood on, he started selling to Mexican magazines while still in his teens, and he eventually landed a regular page of pantomime gags in a weekly called *Mañana.* He got into the habit, as well, of drawing larger, more complex cartoons for the amusement of his fellow high school students. "I did a daily mural cartoon depicting school events," he's said. "Even then most of the humor was sight gags. Done with a big Magic Marker. It was displayed daily in the school corridor. The other students were so disappointed when I missed a day that I had to learn to work fast in order to meet the demand—even on exam days."

In 1962 Aragones decided to immigrate to America. "When I found out how much cartoonists made in the United States, that was that," he's said. "I decided I'd go there and check it out." After a minimum of scuffling, he connected with *Mad*—"I went with my portfolio to the magazine and they saw it and they liked it." In 1967 he added DC Comics to his client list. He drew filler pages for some of their ghost and horror titles, had a hand in writing *Bat Lash* and *Angel and the Ape,* and then contributed regularly to *Plop,* DC's relatively shortlived imitation of *Mad.*

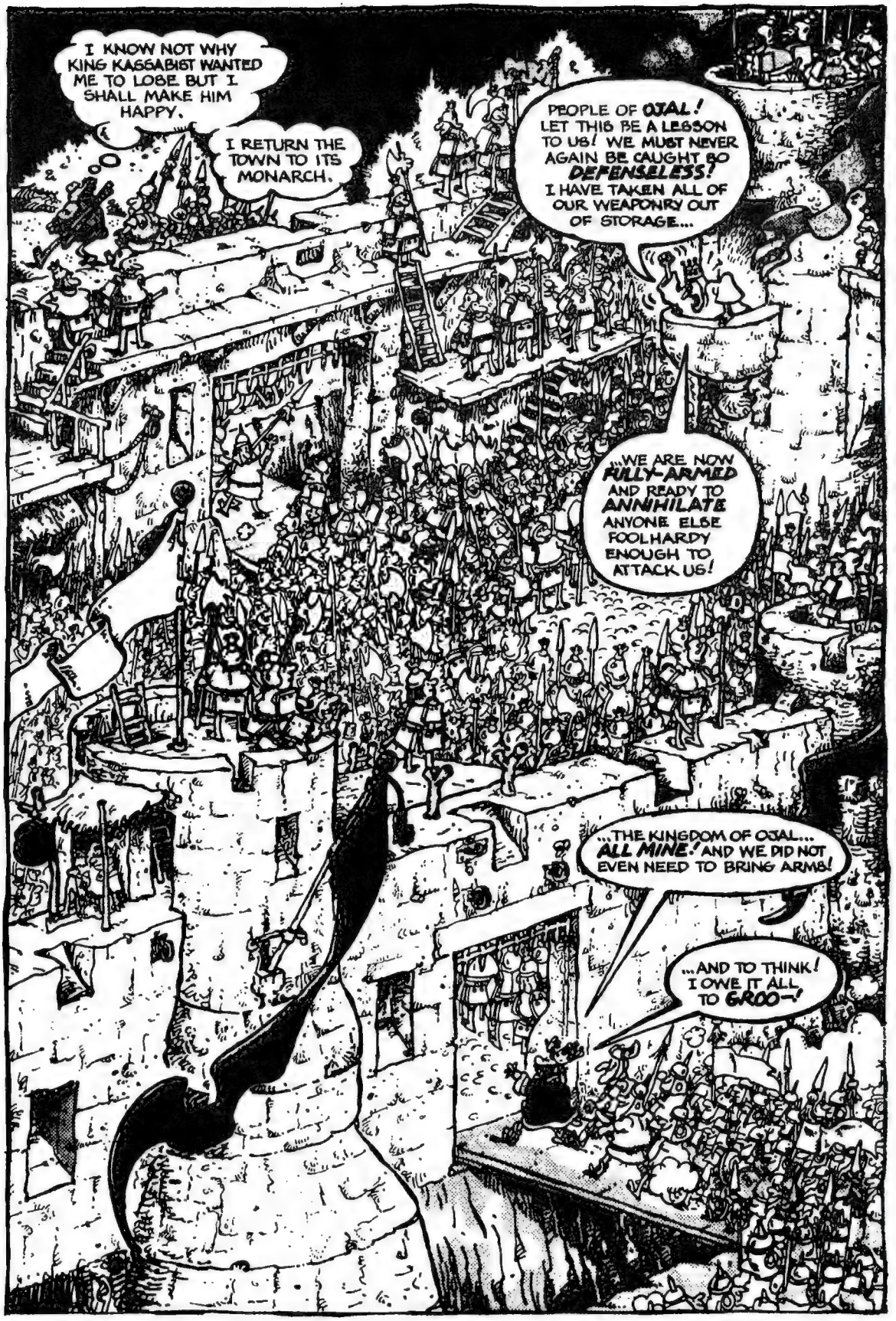
Because he thinks of himself basically as a doodler, Aragones usually does very little penciling. He prefers to work directly in ink, with a fountain pen or a Rapidograph. To him the most important element in his work is the feeling of spontaneity. "I really believe that staying loose in your style will help you stay loose in your gags as well," he says. "It's like being a circus clown—much easier and more fun in a silly clown suit. That's what your drawing style will be—your clown suit."

Aragones's particular clown suit has won him numerous admirers. He was one of the dozen artists included in Nick Meglin's *Art of Humorous Illustration* (1973), along with Jack Davis, Arnold Roth, Maurice Sendak, and Norman Rockwell. "He never loses sight of the fact that he is a humorist," Meglin said of him, "an attitude that, perhaps more than any other single factor, is responsible for his great success." *Amazing Heroes,* in a 1986 interview, waxed enthusiastic about Aragones the man as well. "Sergio Aragones is an entertaining one-man show," the magazine declared. "He is a man of what seems to be limitless energy, humor, and patience. He is a success in his chosen craft and a great hit with everyone he meets."

Not surprisingly, Aragones has worked professionally as an entertainer. He was in the final lineup of "Laugh-In," a television show for which he also provided animation. More recently he turned out animation for Dick Clark's "TV's Bloopers and Practical Jokes."

Since the early 1980s Aragones has been drawing *Groo the Wanderer,* his answer to the barbarian craze. He's said that he had the idea for the character some years earlier, "but all the comic companies insisted that they had to own him." He held out until he could get a satisfactory deal and launched the *Groo* comic book late in 1982 with the independent Pacific Comics. Early in 1985 he moved the series to Marvel's Epic line. The Groo saga, which looks and reads like a burlesque blending of Conan, Red Sonja, and a half-dozen exuberant samurai movies, has allowed Aragones to do more ambitious drawing and to experiment with extended continuity. Writer Mark Evanier is more or less the scripter. "*Groo* is strange," he explains. "*Groo* usually begins with Sergio and me eating corned beef sandwiches at Canter's delicatessen and him drawing on the napkins. Sergio is the world-class champ at drawing on napkins. Come to think of it, he's the world-class champ of drawing on everything. He tells me his idea, and I may or may not add a suggestion or two. Then he roughs it out on typing paper, rough-sketching it and figuring out what goes where. . . . After it's all sketched out, he brings it over and tells me the story, acting it all out. *Groo* is never funnier than when Sergio's acting it out in my kitchen. On the pages he has written a few lines of rough dialogue so I know what he had in mind for each panel. I erase the dialogue, and with a pencil, I write in the copy."

Aragones is a seasoned traveler and has been to every continent, including Antarctica. "I have never failed to communicate anywhere in my favorite language—*pictures,*" he says. "The spoken word is always subject to interpretation, but the drawing literally speaks for itself."


I KNOW NOT WHY KING KASSABIST WANTED ME TO LOSE BUT I SHALL MAKE HIM HAPPY.
I RETURN THE TOWN TO ITS MONARCH.
PEOPLE OF OJAL! LET THIS BE A LESSON TO US! WE MUST NEVER AGAIN BE CAUGHT SO DEFENSELESS! I HAVE TAKEN ALL OF OUR WEAPONRY OUT OF STORAGE...
...WE ARE NOW FULLY-ARMED AND READY TO ANNIHILATE ANYONE ELSE FOOLHARDY ENOUGH TO ATTACK US!
...THE KINGDOM OF OJAL... ALL MINE! AND WE DID NOT EVEN NEED TO BRING ARMS!
...AND TO THINK! I OWE IT ALL TO GROO-!

Aragones and Groo combine to raise the doodle to high art. Copyright © 1984 Sergio Aragones.

STEVE BISSETTE

Two of his earliest obsessions were drawing and dinosaurs—"those incredible gigantic beautiful monsters." What Bissette has been able to do is to fashion a career for himself drawing monsters.

He was born in 1955 and grew up in rustic Vermont. "I've been drawing since I was four years old, perhaps even younger," he told *The Comics Journal* in 1984. After majoring in art for two years at a state college in Vermont, he enrolled in Joe Kubert's New Jersey School of Cartoon and Graphic Art during the mid-1970s. Bissette was one of the first students. The instructors included Kubert, Ric Estrada, Dick Giordano, and Irwin Hasen. "It was an elusive, alive schooling," Bissette has said. "You had to ferret it out, chase it, tree it as best you could. . . . There was a lot of room for play, but it was a hell of a lot of work."

Around the same time, Bissette got involved with drawing for fanzines and undergrounds. Whenever he could, he indulged his fascination with horror. "I've *always* been fascinated by what most people consider grotesque, from bugs to bad B flicks," he's confessed. "That fascination fuels much of what I choose to draw; that is the bent of my nature. I cannot see this as an evil; evil is there, yes, but there is much beauty in there, humor with horror."

He very soon moved into working professionally in comics. By the late 1970s Bissette was drawing for DC war and fantasy titles and for Marvel as well. He also worked for *Heavy Metal* and did the graphic novel version of the flop movie *1941.* But his big break came in the early 1980s, when he teamed up with a fetid creature of the swamps.

The Swamp Thing comes from a long line of moldering monsters, including the Heap, who lurched through *Airboy Comics* in the 1940s, and DC's own Solomon Grundy, who started plaguing the original Green Lantern in the same decade. Swamp Thing first loomed into view in DC's *House of Secrets* in 1971 and graduated to a book of its own the following year. The initial creative group was made up of writer Len Wein and artist Berni Wrightson. The monster's fortunes waned for a bit in the late 1970s, but he was born again in 1982.

Both Bissette and his collaborator Totleben were involved with the revival, assisting chief artist Tom Yeates in various ways. When Yeates decided to leave, they applied for the job. A few issues after they took over, Britisher Alan Moore signed on to do the scripts and the renaissance of Swamp Thing began. As *Comics Journal* sees it, "When Steve and John took over the art chores . . . it was quite evident that something sensational was going to happen." Fans, in increasing numbers, agreed. And Moore's scripts brought even more attention and enthusiasm. Bissette seems to have been inspired by his new job, trying very imaginative layouts and piling on the horror elements. Totleben's flashy inking enhanced the strip.

Bissette left the swamp in the mid-1980s. He has continued to work in the horror area, in such independent titles as *Fearbook* and *Tales of Terror.* He edits and contributes to an ambitious horror comic called *Taboo* and occasionally writes fill-in issues of *Swamp Thing.* He is married and living again in Vermont. "Day-to-day life is good, and when I'm not drawing, I'm usually scamming to draw, toying with ideas, setting up work when it reaches a conscious level," he's said. "The better part of every day is tied up with the process that leads to my actually sitting down at the board and drawing. That flow running through my head doesn't shut off too often."

THIS ONE HAS MADE HIS PEACE WITH THE WILD THINGS. FOR THE MOST PART THEY DO NOT RESENT HIS COMING...
SHOO! SCRAM!
WHO KNOWS WHEN HE CAME TO LIVE AMONG US? IT WAS BEFORE MOST OF US WERE BORN, SURELY...
GOOD LITTLE RABBIT... FAT FROM THE SUMMER'S GREEN.
-WARM... EYES STILL CLEAR...
AND SO THIS ONE HAS BECOME PART OF THE NATURAL ORDER...
LIKE THE TREES...
SHIICK
...GUTS SMELL ALIVE!
LIKE THE NIGHT...
LIKE THE NEED OF ALL...
DIGGER STEW TONIGHT, KIDS!
TO FEED UPON THE GIFTS OF THE ROAD....
... SURELY NONE OF US WILL GO HUNGRY FOR LONG!

The grisly taste of reality, story by Tom Veitch. Copyright © 1986 Tom Veitch and Steve Bissette.

BRIAN BOLLAND

Over the past twenty years or so, American comic books have been invaded from time to time by cadres of talented artists from foreign climes. There was a wave from Spain, another from the Philippines, and most recently an assault from Great Britain. Bolland has been among the most gifted and attention-getting of the British invaders. His work on *Judge Dredd* preceded him, and such American-grown products as *Camelot 3000* have widened his audience and attracted considerable attention.

He was born in Lincolnshire, England, in 1951. Bolland lists Alex Toth as his favorite comic artist and numbers among his wide-ranging influences Maurice Sendak and Winsor McCay. Just out of his teens, he broke into print in England drawing for what he describes now as "unmentionable underground comics." In 1985 Bolland told *Comics Interview,* "The general criteria for doing any kind of work for the underground magazines was that it had to be obscene or offensive. I was drawing comic strips about venereal disease and all kinds of things." Among his early efforts were *Little Nympho in Slumberland* and *The Bizarre Weight-Watchers' Guide,* which parodied the sort of bondage material to be found in older under-the-counter comics. "At the time, I was innocent," maintains Bolland, "and didn't realize I was offending anybody."

By the mid-1970s Bolland was gainfully employed aboveground on the British comic weekly *2000 A.D.,* where one of his colleagues was Dave Gibbons. In 1977 a chap named Judge Dredd began appearing in the black-and-white weekly. "Judge Dredd is basically a futuristic variant on the Dirty Harry Callahan character, fascistic overtones and all," observes *Amazing Heroes.* "Dredd is the sternest, hardest, meanest, and best of a cadre of lawmen known as 'Judges,' who keep law and order in the twenty-second century. Their 'beat' is Mega-City One, a huge city complex which comprises the whole Eastern seaboard of America." Bolland eventually became the regular artist on the feature. "It was very complicated working on *Dredd,"* Bolland has said, "because I know he was a morally reprehensible character—but he was in the role of the hero, the main figure in the story that the reader identified with. . . . I knew full well that he was not the kind of man I could identify with at all, so I was always trying to draw him in an unsympathetic way."

By this time Bolland's work had matured and he'd developed a forceful, yet precise, style, rich with deep shadows and the detailed pen renderings that are a tradition in many British black-and-white comics. In the opinion of *Amazing Heroes* Bolland was the most successful artist of the several to work on the feature. "Right from the start, it seemed that Brian's bold and exciting style, coupled with imagination and visual wit, would prove popular."

Bolland began working for DC in 1980, although he remained based in England. "Joe Staton was drawing *Green Lantern* when he came over here for a convention," he's explained. "Joe rang up Jack C. Harris, who was editor at the time, and mentioned he'd got a real fan who'd like to draw something; and Jack said, 'Okay, put him on the cover.' He'd come across *Judge Dredd* somehow and liked my stuff, so he knew what he was getting. That was the cover for *Green Lantern* #127. He liked it sufficiently to commission me to do two or three more and some for *Tales of the Green Lantern Corps."*

After a few more jobs came *Camelot 3000,* his magnum opus. Written by Mike Barr, this blend of science fiction and Arthurian legends was a twelve-part maxi-series. In many ways it was a sort of landmark. "It was DC's first comic book to be printed on high-quality paper, with reproduction previously undreamed of for comic books," point out Don and Maggie Thompson, editors of the *Comics Buyer's Guide.* "It was one of the first DC comic books to be distributed solely through the nation's comic shops. . . . *Camelot 3000* was DC Comics' first comic book for mature readers."

Bolland's work grew increasingly better over the two-plus years it took the series to run its course. "No insult intended to the inkers, but I was getting so possessive about what the book looked like that I was trying to turn in penciled artwork in an inked style," he's said. "I felt that . . . it had to look better and better, so I was trying to put more and more detail and more finish into the pages as time went on."

Bolland's work on *Judge Dredd* has been available in this country since 1983 and that, too, has added to his growing reputation. Among his most recent work is a handsome Batman graphic novel entitled *The Killing Joke.*

THERE HE IS ! DRESSED LIKE A JUDGE — OR A MOCKERY OF ONE !
HAVE YOU COME TO WITNESSS JUDGMENT ?
WE'VE COME TO SLAM YOUR BUTT IN POKEY, MISTER !
ROSS — STAY BACK !
UHH !
HIS HAND — SLICED RIGHT THROUGH ROSS'S NECK !
HE'S GETTING UP !
NOTHING COULD GET UP AFTER THAT ! WHO IS THIS CREEP ?
RAPID FIRE ! BLOW HIS BONES AWAY !
YOU CANNOT KILL WHAT DOES NOT LIVE ! I HAVE COME TO BRING LAW TO THISS CITY ! MY LAW —
THE LAW OF DEATH !
DEATH
NEXT PROG: THE GUILTY . . . AND THE DAMNED !

Brian Bolland's vivid work makes clear the difficulties involved in stopping a hero who's already dead. Copyright © 1987 Titan Books Ltd.

WAYNE BORING

Superman has had a tendency to attract much more attention to himself than to most of the many artists who've illustrated his adventures over the last half-century. Not surprisingly, Boring was overshadowed by the character he devoted over thirty years of his life to drawing. For about the first ten years of that period he didn't even get a credit on *Superman.*

Boring had been involved with the Man of Steel almost from the start of the hero's commercial rise. He'd studied art at the Chicago Art Institute, worked as an assistant on the *Big Chief Wahoo* newspaper strip, and labored in the advertising department of a Virginia newspaper. Then in the late 1930s he came across an ad in *Writer's Digest* placed by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. Boring responded and got a job. He moved to Cleveland, where the partners had a studio, and found himself ghosting *Slam Bradley, Federal Men,* and the rapidly rising *Superman.* "We had an office about twelve by twelve with four drawing boards set up there," he recalled in a 1984 *Amazing Heroes* interview. "It was the smallest office in Cleveland."

Although Boring had studied with J. Allen St. John, whose heroic style was well suited to the many Edgar Rice Burroughs Tarzan and John Carter of Mars stories and novels he illustrated, the early work Boring did in the Cleveland shop was drawn in a variation of Shuster's diagrammatic, cartoony style. Early on, Boring was allowed to sign such features as *Federal Men,* but never *Superman.* But he did draw several of the man from Krypton's comic book adventures and, in the early 1940s, some sequences of the newspaper strip as well. By that time it was becoming evident that Superman would sell even if not drawn in Shuster's style. Greater variety became evident in the work of the other ghosts and Boring in particular began working out a drawing approach that was recognizably his own.

Gradually he came to do his own highly individual version of Superman. In 1970 James Steranko said of it, "Boring salvaged the Man of Steel by transforming him into a massive, muscled version of virile exuberance. His expressive faces and tight, incisive rendering breathed new life into Superman's tired hulk. Cities became skyscrapered stylizations of vertical lines. . . . Boring's classic figure remains as the model for today's Superman." Even the newest John Byrne version of Superman owes more to Boring than it does to Shuster.

From the mid-1940s onward Boring did most of the drawing on the *Superman* newspaper strip, daily and Sunday. He not only beefed up Superman but glamorized Lois Lane as well. When asked about how he evolved his striking style, Boring would usually reply that he'd been greatly influenced by illustrator/cartoonist Frank Godwin, known for such strips as *Connie* and *Rusty Riley.* There is absolutely no resemblance between the work of the two artists, but perhaps Boring did receive inspiration from the older artist.

Boring also did some moonlighting for an outfit called Novelty Press in the mid-1940s. He drew the title character in *Blue Bolt* and a female detective named Tony Gayle for *Young King Cole.* Most of these he signed Jack Harmon, the first and middle names of his father.

When Siegel and Shuster parted company with DC in the late 1940s, Boring stayed on. He continued as the chief artist on Superman and, by the 1950s, was getting a credit on the feature. He stayed with Superman until the late 1960s, working with Mort Weisinger, the hero's editor at the time, until the day that Weisinger simply called him in and fired him. Boring then became a nonperson as far as the DC administration of that time was concerned. In 1971 a hardcover titled *Superman: From the 30s to the 70s* was published, with Boring's well-known hands-on-hips drawing of Superman on the cover. It featured more than eighty pages of his work, along with several of his covers. Boring wasn't mentioned anywhere in the book. (Neither, for that matter, were Siegel and Shuster.)

After Superman, he did a little work for Marvel, but mostly concentrated on assisting/ghosting on such newspaper strips as *Prince Valiant, Davy Jones,* and *Rip Kirby.*

In his final years Boring and his wife settled in Florida. He pretty much gave up comics in favor of painting, although he did do one more Superman job for an anniversary issue. He worked as a security guard—"This is a mild job I've got . . . they pay me well." Boring died in 1986.

Here Boring proves he can draw things other than superheroes. The publisher cropped just about all of his Jack Harmon penname. Copyright © 1947 The Premium Service Co. Inc.

CARL BURGOS

Not all the pioneers of the Golden Age were master draftsmen. Some, like Burgos, were primitives whose enthusiasm for telling stories in this new graphic medium somewhat compensated for their lack of technical skill. Burgos's major creation was the Human Torch who, in one guise or another, has been around for almost a half century. In fact, the Torch's career in comics was a good deal more successful than that of his creator.

Carl Burgos got into the funny book business in the late 1930s, after having working in an engraving plant that had Harry "A" Chesler as a client. Chesler was one of the earliest packagers and producers of comic books, and when Burgos decided he'd like to graduate to drawing and writing, he got a job at the Chesler sweatshop. He went from there to Funnies, Inc.

In 1939 Lloyd Jacquet, who was neither an artist nor a writer, started an art and editorial service to rival Chesler and christened it with the businesslike name of Funnies, Inc. Burgos, then just twenty-two, was one of the founding members, along with Bill Everett. Their first important client was Martin Goodman, an enterprising young pulp-magazine publisher who decided to branch out into comic books. His series, *Marvel Mystery Comics,* debuted late in 1939 and became the cornerstone of today's Marvel empire. While not everything Funnies, Inc. dreamed up for the premiere issue was first rate, the shop did manage to include such characters as Sub-Mariner, the Angel, Ka-Zar, and the Human Torch.

The Torch wasn't actually human at all. He was a "synthetic man—an exact replica of a human being." There was something appealing, though, about this android who could burst into flame, toss around great balls of fire, put on impressive displays of pyrotechnics, and play with fire without getting burned or criticized by his parents. The Human Torch became just about the most popular character Goodman had in the 1940s. Only Captain America and Sub-Mariner offered any real competition. When the boy-wonder fad got going in the early 1940s, as a result of the popularity of Batman's young sidekick, Burgos added an inflammable youth named Toro to his feature.

In the first issue of the *Human Torch* quarterly, Burgos gave a fanciful account of how he cooked up the Torch, claiming the whole notion came to him in a sort of hallucinatory dream he had on a hot Fourth of July. After dreaming of furnaces and hot coals, Burgos turned into a skyrocket and while still glowing visited his anxious publisher. "The red glow from my body lighted up his face. . . . There's our new character, a HUMAN TORCH!" Actually, according to Everett, the creation was a bit more prosaic. "Carl and I were quite close friends and we usually held our story conferences very informally over a drink," he once recalled. "We were discussing the new book in the Webster Bar, and between us, whether it was his idea or mine or a combination of both, we decided on using the two elements, fire and water. We did that because everything else was being used at the time. . . . We talked about what we could do with them, and if I'm not mistaken, the idea of a character turning himself into flame came first. Carl called him the Human Torch."

Burgos had a crude, forceful style, and he was good at staging the catastrophic scenes that the flaming actions of the Torch and Toro usually required. His people were rumpled and chunky, most of them ugly. You found no slender, beautiful women in his panels. He was well aware of the limitations of his work, but proud that it was all his own and that he never swiped. "I enjoyed everybody's strips, but if they wanted Raymond or Caniff, they could look at Raymond or Caniff," he once told James Steranko. "The miserable drawing was all mine, but I was having fun."

Burgos had a fondness for androids, and he invented two others. For *Amazing Man Comics* there was a thick-headed hero named the Iron Skull and for *Target Comics* a two-fisted pacifist known as the White Streak. He also drew one episode about a masked man called the Thunderer for Marvel's *Daring Comics.* Then in 1942 he entered the service. "I started in the Air Force, took infantry ranger training, went overseas as a rifleman, was transferred to the Signal Corps, and came back in the engineers," he explained to Steranko in *The Steranko History of Comics.* "It sounds crazy but it could only happen to a comic book man."

Comic book art had grown considerably more sophisticated while he was away and Burgos never quite reestablished himself after the war. He did draw the Torch again, briefly, in the mid-1940s and again in the mid-1960s. He was also involved with some less-than-first-rate black-and-white comic books in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Judging by his work of those years, he wasn't having much fun anymore.

During this same period and into the 1980s Burgos was employed in an editorial capacity by Harris Publications in Manhattan. He died in March 1984.

GUNS FLASH IN THE HANDS OF THE TRIO AS THE RED SEAL SWINGS INTO ACTION!
SUCKERS!
NOW TO GET THAT PACKAGE!
TAKING A LOW FLYING LEAP... THE RED SEAL TACKLES THE FLEEING SOLDIER WITH THE PACKAGE...
I'LL TAKE THIS PACKAGE, IF YOU DON'T MIND!
WATCH OUT! YOU'RE TEARING IT!
Suddenly
UGH!
OUCH!
YOU OKAY ? GOOD! GET BACK TO CAMP! YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO THERE!
RIGHT! SO LONG, GUYS!
AS THE VILLAINOUS MEN SPEED FROM THE SCENE, RED SEAL REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS..
NO USE CHASING THEM! THEY'RE GOING TOO FAST!
SAY! WHAT ARE THESE PELLETS DOING IN MY HAND? ...THEY MUST'VE FALLEN FROM THE PACKAGE THE SENTRY HAD!
YEOW! THEY'VE BURST INTO FLAMES!

This is the Red Seal, briefly the sidekick of the White Streak, playing with fire.

Copyright © 1941 Funnies, Inc.

JACK BURNLEY

Comic books were just an interlude in Burnley's long art career; he spent less than ten years in the field. During that period, however, he cocreated Starman, drew the Justice Society and numerous DC covers, and became the first artist to draw both Superman and Batman.

He was born Hardin Burnley in 1911 and "had no formal art training and never went to an art school." While in his early teens, he was hired as an office boy by the King Features Syndicate art department in New York City—"My job consisted of emptying wastepaper baskets and sharpening pencils." The youthful artist admired the work of such sports cartoonists as Willard Mullin, Will Gould, and Robert Ripley. In 1929, the syndicate promoted him to a daily sports cartoon of his own.

The format for most sports panels—pretty much a lost genre today—was a large portrait of the ballplayer, prizefighter, or golfer of the day; a few comments; and a couple of spot drawings alongside the portrait. The portraits were usually adapted from photos, but the small vignettes often involved original drawing. In 1938, Burnley recalled, "When King bought out a smaller syndicate, a better sports cartoonist came in the deal, so they let me go." Burnley had by this time been drawing musclemen—and women—for nearly a decade. And in that period a new industry had come into being, one that was just starting to realize the value of heroes with muscles. The comic book industry became Burnley's next employer.

Eventually Burnley dropped in on DC with his portfolio and, as he said, "They remembered me right away from my sports cartoons. Whitney Ellsworth, then editor of the Superman and Batman comics, hired me and gave me a Superman script to illustrate right away." His first Superman story ran in *Action Comics* #28 (September 1940), credited to Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. Burnley was something of an odd choice to ghost DC's top character, since he worked in a much more detailed and realistic style and his Superman was more muscular than that of Shuster and his staff. By that time, though, readers had taken the Man of Steel to their hearts and it didn't matter whether he was rendered in cartoon or illustrative style. Burnley did six Superman adventures in a row, all of them handsomely drawn. He also provided one-page sports fillers for *Action* and did similar stuff for McKay's reprint titles—*Magic Comics,* et al.

In spring 1941, Burnley got a superhero of his own, one he was allowed to sign. Starman was launched in DC's *Adventure Comics* (April 1941), supplanting Sandman and Hourman as the magazine's leading man. Burnley designed the new character, and the dependable Gardner Fox did the writing. Fox seems to have been inspired a great deal by Skyman, a character he'd created for the rival *Big Shot Comics* the year before, and there are several similarities between the two heroes. Both are languid playboys in real life; both have no real superpowers and rely on gadgets in order to fly—the mysterious Wing airship in Skyman's case, the gravity rod in Starman's. Burnley did an enthusiastic job on the drawing, rendering the required bizarre villains, strange inventions, and beautiful damsels in distress in a distinctive way. Yet Starman didn't really catch on. When Burnley had been in business for less than a year, the winning team of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby came to *Adventure* to take over *Sandman* and *Manhunter.* Their slam-bang approach to superheroics soon dominated the magazine, forcing *Starman* into a second-banana position. Burnley left the character soon thereafter.

He stayed on with DC, drawing effective covers for *Action, Superman, World's Finest,* et al., and drawing the introductory material for the Justice Society stories in *All-Star.* He began as well to ghost Batman, chiefly in *Batman* magazine. In addition, he penciled the *Batman* newspaper Sunday page for several years and drew some of the daily sequences. He ghosted the *Superman* strip for a time also. It made for a busy though completely anonymous career.

"It was hard work," he's said, "but you can find fun in anything." Nevertheless, he decided in the late 1940s to seek out easier work. Burnley returned to newspaper sports cartooning, first in the East and then in San Francisco. He went from that to working in a newspaper art department and has since retired.

UNBELIEVABLE! LIVING MEN IN AN UNDERSEA CITY IN A SUBMERGED MOUNTAIN-- AND MY GAUGE SHOWS THAT THERE IS A MIST-LIKE AIR OUT-SIDE!
WELCOME TO NEW ATLANTIS!
BOB LANDS THE SHIP IN A CLEARING!
OUR LANGUAGE HERE IS MENTAL TELEPATHY! I AM KING SARX, DESCENDANT OF THE ANCIENT ATLANTEANS -- THE SUPER-CIVILIZATION OF MY ANCESTORS ENABLED THEM TO SURVIVE THE TIDAL WAVE THAT SANK OUR LAND AGES AGO!
"OUR AIR SUPPLY IS FURNISHED BY GIANT ENGINES THAT THIN OUT THE SURROUNDING WATER INTO AIR-VAPOR."
BOB MEETS THE EXOTIC PRINCESS TELLURA, WHO SOON BECOMES INTERESTED IN THE HANDSOME STRANGER
LATER, HE DETERMINES TO FIND OUT THE SECRET OF THE CITY'S "INVISIBLE" TYRANT. --WHILE THE OTHERS SLEEP, BOB AND TELLURA SILENTLY ENTER THE WEIRD "HALL OF AEONS"--
I MAY BE ABLE TO FREE YOUR PEOPLE FROM THIS TYRANT.

Burnley's only plainclothes hero, Bullet Bob, appeared just once, in *Miracle Comics*.
Copyright © 1941 Hillman Periodicals.

NICK CARDY

When he started working in comic books back in 1939, Nick Cardy used his real name of Nicholas Viscardi. As Viscardi, he specialized in pretty women. Under his adopted pen name he devoted much of his time, especially in the 1960s, to superheroes.

Cardy was born in 1920, grew up in New York City, and, like several of his comic book contemporaries, attended the Art Students League. In addition to cartooning, his art interests included murals, sculpture, and watercolors. At the age of nineteen he joined the Eisner-Iger shop. The Nick Cardy name was first signed to the stories about the costumed fighter Quicksilver that he drew for *National Comics.* The shop left the Cardy byline on *Quicksilver* after he moved on and Paul Gustavson and others used it. He retained his real name for *Lady Luck,* whose adventures ran in four-page installments in Eisner's weekly *Spirit* newspaper comic book. Cardy took over *Lady Luck* as artist in 1941 and stayed with the "debutante Robin Hood" until the middle of the following year. His earlier work had been somewhat stiff and out of kilter, but with *Lady Luck* he made a considerable leap forward.

Another shop client was Fiction House, whose magazines were aimed at adolescent boys and the ever-increasing numbers of GIs. Thus the female form, usually as undraped as possible, was an important element in the stories in their line of magazines—*Wings Comics, Fight Comics, Jumbo Comics,* and others. Cardy, still signing himself Viscardi here, did some very impressive work for Fiction House, particularly on Senorita Rio in *Fight Comics* and Camilla in *Jungle.* He was not only good at drawing the female form, clad in everything from silk to animal skin, but at depicting the Nazi villains, steaming jungles, and wild animals this brand of adventure story called for. Increasing confidence allowed him to experiment with layouts, too, and his staging of action became increasingly effective.

Drafted in 1943, he served as a tank driver with the Third Armored Division in Germany. Cardy once said he'd received nine Purple Hearts—"Seven doing comics and peddling strips and two from the Army." In 1945 he returned to comics, picking up again with such characters as the jungle girl Camilla. He went to work for DC in 1950, using a tighter and more realistic style on true crime stories for *Gang Busters.* From 1952 he worked for the Pines magazines, producing crime, war, romance, and horror for *Adventures into Darkness,* among others. And in 1950 he had been one of the artists to take a turn drawing the daily *Tarzan* newspaper strip.

By the mid-1950s he was back full time with DC and working on *Daniel Boone, Congo Bill,* and *Tomahawk.* It wasn't until the early 1960s that Cardy got actively into the drawing of superheroes. He was first involved with the revival of Aquaman, DC's answer to Sub-Mariner. *The Comic Book Heroes,* by Will Jacobs and Gerard Jones, calls Cardy's art on the feature "colorful and naturalistic." In 1965 he began a long association with *Teen Titans.* The 1970s found him adding various Batman teamups to his chores. During these years he was also a popular cover artist, creating attractive packaging for many of the DC titles.

Cardy pretty much left comics in the late 1970s. According to a DC spokesman, it's believed that Nick Cardy is now working as a commercial artist somewhere in Florida.

CAMILLA
Queen of the Jungle Empire
CARDI
AMILLA'S VOW TO A DEAD MAN HURLS HER IN THE PATH OF RENEGADE GREED AND PUTS HER LIFE IN PAWN TO A BLACK COBRA SNAKE GOD...
A GUN WOULD HAVE SAVED US THAT TWO HOUR CHASE!
PERHAPS! BUT SUCH A WEAPON IS HARD TO FIND IN THE JUNGLE, BEN... LISTEN! I HEAR A SAFARI MOVING UP TO THE BIG ROCK!
COME ON! WE MAY BE ABLE TO STOP THEM!

Cardy during his Good Girl Art days. Copyright © 1943 Fiction House, Inc.

PAUL CHADWICK

Over the past few years, the development and blossoming of comic shops and the rise of independent publishers have made it possible for artists to become fairly well known and relatively successful without working exclusively for Marvel or DC. The current status of Paul Chadwick is a good example. Although he's drawn for Marvel, Chadwick's independently done *Concrete* has earned him the most attention, garnering enthusiastic responses from fans and critics. Harlan Ellison, for example, has called *Concrete* "delight incarnate."

Like many cartoonists, Chadwick was an enthusiastic comics fan in his youth. Considerably more gung-ho than the average reader, he became actively involved with fandom and amateur press publications fairly early on. After leaving the University of Washington, Chadwick studied at the Art Center College of Design in Southern California. He made his way into comic books in a rather circuitous way, working first in Hollywood as a storyboard artist for Warner Bros., Disney, George Lucas, and several other major movie outfits. Among the films he was involved with were *Pee Wee's Big Adventure, The Big Easy, Miracle Mile,* and *Ewoks: The Battle for Endora.* Chadwick has done a great deal of painting and illustrating as well, including several covers for paperback science-fiction novels.

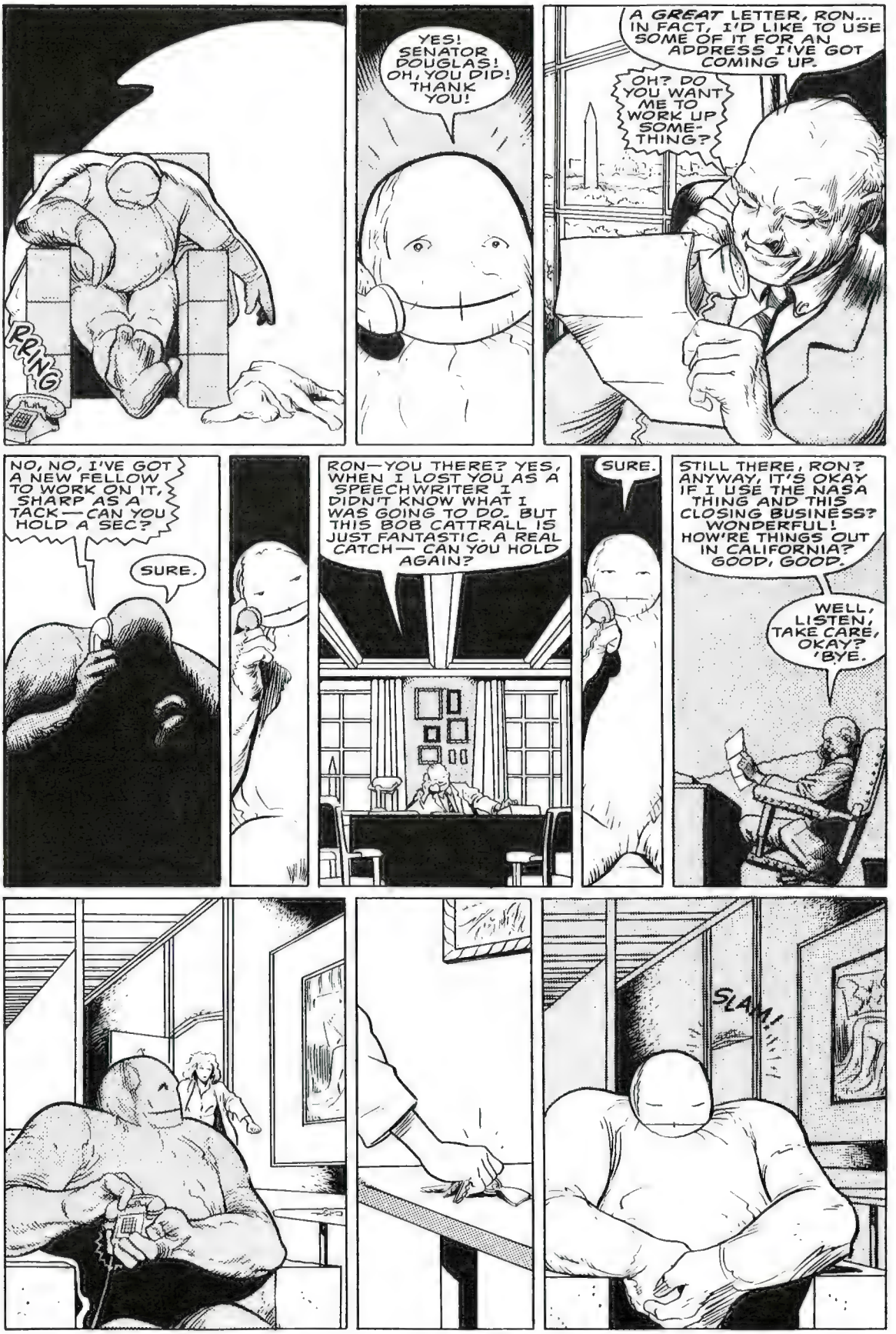
As a writer/artist Chadwick lists a wide range of influences, among them the works of Kurt Vonnegut, Isaac Asimov, Jack Vance, numerous mystery novelists, James Steranko, Alex Toth, Moebius, and several other European comic-book artists. "I'm eclectic enough," he told Jan Strand in an interview in *Amazing Heroes* magazine, "that I don't show the strong earmarks of anyone in particular."

In 1983 Chadwick put together a sample *Concrete* story and pitched the character to various comic book publishers, ranging from Marvel and DC to assorted independents. He was still gainfully employed in Hollywood at the time. There was some interest from the indies, but nobody offered a contract, so he went back to the drawing board to work on a new presentation. In 1985 he took a crack at the Marvel tryout story, a test that prospective Marvel artists have to pass. It was a six-page Vision yarn that Chadwick characterizes as a "storytelling nightmare." He hand delivered it to Marvel's Manhattan offices on a trip East and while there showed some of his samples to editor Archie Goodwin. Chadwick doesn't feel he did a brilliant job on his Vision tryout and credits Goodwin's enthusiasm for his being hired to draw *Dazzler.* He saw the magazine through its final issues, managing to fit into the Marvel style while at the same time taking a more thoughtful, somewhat gentler approach to storytelling.

Chadwick persisted with *Concrete,* and in 1986 his character broke into print as a short adventure in *Dark Horse Presents* #1. That story made up part of a new presentation Chadwick sent out to a list of publishers. This time there were several offers, including one from Goodwin at Marvel's Epic line. Chadwick decided, however, to go with Dark Horse, the main reason being that they offered "absolute freedom." A bimonthly was launched in 1987 and has proved successful, prompting Chadwick to describe his situation with his publisher as "very fortunate." In addition to his own magazine, Concrete also appears regularly in shorter episodes in *Dark Horse Presents.*

Concrete has won a following because he isn't just another superhero. Starting with the notion of a human brain being transferred into an alien body, Chadwick has constructed a very personal fantasy. Although Concrete is somewhat similar to the Thing in looks and bulk, Chadwick doesn't take kindly to comparisons between the Jack Kirby–Stan Lee creation and his own. "Concrete is in no way a spinoff or commentary on the Thing," he's said. "Concrete's a gentle, ivory-tower speechwriter grafted into an alien body. He tries to make honest money and mounts jerryrigged expeditions so he can write travel articles." Chadwick's interested in exploring what an ordinary man might do if put into a superpowered body. There is a sadness to the feature, a melancholy lurking behind the kidding around. The comic is much more about loneliness and being different than it is about traditional action and adventure.

Now settled in the wilds of Connecticut with his wife, Chadwick intends to concentrate on *Concrete* for the foreseeable future.


RRING
YES! SENATOR DOUGLAS! OH, YOU DID! THANK YOU!
A GREAT LETTER, RON... IN FACT, I'D LIKE TO USE SOME OF IT FOR AN ADDRESS I'VE GOT COMING UP.
OH? DO YOU WANT ME TO WORK UP SOME-THING?
NO, NO, I'VE GOT A NEW FELLOW TO WORK ON IT, SHARP AS A TACK—CAN YOU HOLD A SEC?
SURE.
RON—YOU THERE? YES, WHEN I LOST YOU AS A SPEECHWRITER I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO. BUT THIS BOB CATTRALL IS JUST FANTASTIC. A REAL CATCH— CAN YOU HOLD AGAIN?
SURE.
STILL THERE, RON? ANYWAY, IT'S OKAY IF I USE THE NASA THING AND THIS CLOSING BUSINESS? WONDERFUL! HOW'RE THINGS OUT IN CALIFORNIA? GOOD, GOOD.
WELL, LISTEN, TAKE CARE, OKAY? 'BYE.
SLAM!

Paul Chadwick's evocative style captured fully here. Copyright © 1988 Paul Chadwick.

JOHNNY CRAIG

Craig, a realistic cartoonist whose specialties were crime and horror, is best remembered for his productive association with the EC line in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Unlike many artists, he attracted a fan following not because he was drawing a specific character but because of the quality of his work on a wide range of stories. He also has the distinction of having drawn what was, at one time, the best-known comic book cover in America.

He was born in 1926 and attended the Art Students League in New York City. While he was still a teenager, just before the United States entered World War II, Craig got a job assisting Harry Lampert. A gag cartoonist at heart, Lampert was then turning out straight adventure features—*The King* and *Red, White, and Blue*—for the All-American branch of DC. Through Lampert, Craig met DC editor/cartoonist Sheldon Mayer. Mayer "took me under his wing," Craig has recalled, "and for a while I freelanced, doing the lettering on his strip called *Scribbly.* That was during the school months. During the following summer he asked me to come down to the office and work full time as one of the staff artists, pasting up, making corrections, doing lettering, and things like that."

Craig's career was interrupted by service in the army. He returned to comics in 1947, freelancing for outfits such as Fox. He also hooked up with EC, the company M. C. Gaines had formed after selling out his All-American titles to DC. Craig was there when the elder Gaines died and his son William Gaines took over. He did considerable work for the new titles young Gaines introduced—*War Against Crime, Crime Patrol,* and others. Craig had a good design sense and he drew many effective, posterlike covers for the EC true crime comics.

Craig's finest hour at EC came when Gaines introduced a new string of titles, including *Vault of Horror, Haunt of Fear,* and *Crime SuspenStories,* in 1950. He continued to do covers as well as horror and crime stories. EC at this period seemed to be especially fond of stories involving conflicts between men and women, often husbands and wives, and Craig handled many of those. His style was somewhat in the Caniff mode and his layouts were always direct and uncluttered.

Craig also distinguished himself in the early 1950s by posing for photos of the three characters who served as narrators in the horror comic books—The Vault-keeper, the Old Witch, and the Crypt-keeper. EC fanatics could get the pictures by sending in a dime for each one or a quarter for all three. It was apparently a very successful mail-order promotion.

Aimed at an older and somewhat more sophisticated audience, many of the comic books of the postwar years were considerably less inhibited than those of the Golden Age. Comics had always had their detractors, and the crime and horror titles of the late 1940s and early 1950s drew an ever-increasing amount of criticism. Psychiatrist Fredric Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* came out in 1954; a well-intended but not exactly fair-minded attack on comic book excesses, the book played an important part in spurring investigations and moves toward censorship. Material from the EC titles was included in Wertham's exhibits and Craig's cover for an issue of *Crime SuspenStories* was among the examples. Craig's graphic depiction of a hanged man was tersely captioned by Wertham, "Cover of a children's comic book."

The cover that Craig drew for *Crime SuspenStories* #22 got even more attention. In 1954 the United States Senate held hearings in New York City to investigate sex and violence in comics and its possible effect on juvenile crime. One of the presiding senators, presidential hopeful Estes Kefauver, held up the Craig cover to witness William Gaines. "Here is your May issue. This seems to be a man with a bloody ax holding a woman's head up, which has been severed from her body," he said, adding with a straight face the question, "Do you think that's in good taste?"

Commenting on the ECs of the period some years later, Craig said, "Most of the stories seem rather tame in comparison with some of the things that are in view today; but at the time I do think many of the stories were too gory, too ugly, simply too gruesome for my particular taste in horror tales."

EC hung on until the mid-1950s, dropping the horror and crime titles and trying tamer stuff. Craig continued to draw for them and edited an adventure book called *Extra.* After EC, he said, he "freelanced for a while, but primarily I just left the industry itself and went into advertising." Since then he's alternated between advertising and comic books, coming back into the field periodically to work for DC and Marvel. At the moment he's in a commercial art phase.

IT WAS NO EASY JOURNEY! THEY PLODDED ON, STEP AFTER STEP... AND BRAD FOUND HIS THOUGHTS OF WILLOW GIVING HIM TROUBLE...
I'M A HEEL TO WANT TO KILL HER! I COULD HAVE PICKED ANOTHER VICTIM! SHE'S SUCH A SWELL GIRL! I... I LIKE HER SO MUCH!
AND WILLOW? SHE WAS HAVING DIFFICULTIES WITH HER HEART, JUST AS BRAD WAS...
HE'S BEEN SO WONDERFUL! I DON'T KNOW WHATEVER MADE ME THINK I WANTED TO KILL HIM! I...I THINK I'M FALLING IN LOVE WITH HIM!
AND THEN, SUDDENLY, WITHOUT ANY WARNING, A RAGING, BLINDING SNOWSTORM SWOOPED DOWN ON THEM...
WILLOW! HOLD MY HAND TIGHTLY! WE'VE GOT TO KEEP CLOSE TOGETHER!
BRAD! I'M FRIGHTENED!
FOR SEVERAL HOURS THEY STRUGGLED THROUGH THE BLIZZARD, STUMBLING AND FALLING AGAIN AND AGAIN IN THE DEEP BANKS OF SNOW... TRYING DESPERATELY TO REACH THE CABIN AND SAFETY...
(GASP!) THERE, WILLOW! THERE'S THE CABIN! I CAN... (GASP!) I CAN SEE IT!
ANOTHER HALF HOUR PASSED BEFORE THEY FINALLY ENTERED THE CABIN AND THREW THEMSELVES ON THE BUNKS... EXHAUSTED! IT WAS ALMOST DAWN...
THEY SLEPT SOUNDLY UNTIL EARLY EVENING! WILLOW AWOKE TO FIND BRAD BENDING OVER HER, AN ANXIOUS EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE...
BRAD! OH... FOR A MOMENT YOU STARTLED ME!
I...I COULDN'T HEAR YOU BREATHING! YOU...YOU LOOKED DEAD! BUT I CAN SEE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! I...I WAS SO WORRIED...
BRAD...
DARLING...
5

A steamy scene played out against the winter's cold here in "The Vault of Horror."

R. CRUMB

Like the wandering country blues singers of a half-century ago that he so admires, Crumb has remained steadfastly outside the cultural mainstream. He first gained attention as an underground cartoonist and he continues as such today, one of the handful who've survived the rather rough journey from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Quite probably the best-known and best-documented recluse in America, Crumb is possessed of a compulsive integrity and has steadfastly avoided selling out. He's the acknowledged father of underground comics, the man who popularized the phrase "Keep on truckin'," and he continues to be one of the most iconoclastic and audacious of cartoonists. He's rarely worked in a conventional comics setting, apparently believing that one of our inalienable rights is the right to use the funny book medium in completely individual and unrestrained ways.

Robert Crumb was born in Philadelphia in 1943 and soon became obsessed with comic books, especially the funny animal epics of Carl Barks and Walt Kelly. Crumb grew up, lefthanded and Catholic, in such garden spots as Philadelphia; Ames, Iowa; and Albert Lea, Minnesota. His father was a career marine. Family tradition has it that Crumb started drawing somewhere between the ages of two and three. He had two brothers and two sisters, and by the time Crumb was six, most of his siblings were drawing, too. His brother Charles, a year older, was the most enthusiastic, and he and Robert, as a team and individually, began to turn out their own amateur comic books, mostly funny animal stuff. Even today Crumb's work has a home-grown, just-for-fun look.

When Crumb was in his teens, he and his brother produced a parody fanzine called *Foo.* He also wrote letters to other fanzines and did artwork for his high school paper. Of his youth and teenage years Crumb has said, "I was such a big jerk, nobody liked me. I felt this horrible, painful sense of rejection. There was a ten-year period when I felt fiercely alienated from the world. I probably wouldn't have gotten that deeply into cartooning if that hadn't happened."

The year 1962 found Crumb on his own in Cleveland. He got a job in the art department of the American Greetings Corporation. He rose in the organization and eventually drew a comic strip for the company newsletter. In 1964 he ventured to New York, going to work for Harvey Kurtzman's *Help!* The following year his drawings started appearing in the magazine. His Harlem sketches got considerable attention. "I took a look at his stuff. I couldn't believe it," Gil Kane has said. "Already the drawings were so telling and compelling, he had a mature point of view."

Crumb drifted around the country and also traveled through Europe. By 1967 he was in San Francisco. His arrival in the Haight-Ashbury area pretty much coincided with the flowering of the hippie movement, and Crumb became a sort of crotchety graphic Boswell of the generation. His earlier training as an outsider served him well; he was able to write and draw about drugs, love, protest, and violence with a detachment lacking in some of the other chroniclers and celebrators of the flower children. Crumb sold *Fritz the Cat* to *Cavalier,* a *Playboy* simulacrum, and launched *Zap Comix* during this period. Jay Lynch, another underground pioneer, has said that *Zap Comix* #1 was "a book that would change the course of comic book history . . . the first successful underground comic book." Crumb drew the entire twenty-four-page magazine, featuring such characters as Mr. Natural, Eggs Ackley, Schuman the Human, and Bob Dill the Singing Pickle.

His style was a highly personal amalgam of all sorts of influences—the funny animals he'd loved as a kid, the cute greeting cards he'd had to draw, the newspaper funnies of the 1920s and 1930s, and the comic book work of such earlier zanies as Basil Wolverton. He mixed in references to jazz, obscure country blues singers, and current television.

The list of magazines he contributed to during the heyday of the undergrounds is long and not all of the titles are of the sort that could be mentioned in polite society. They include *Bijou Funnies, Big Ass Comics, Bizarre Sex, Head Comix, Slow Death Funnies,* and *Snatch Funnies.* He created almost as many different characters as Chester Gould created villains. One of his favorite characters has been himself. Crumb as depicted by Crumb is not a handsome fellow, nor is he especially likable. His posture is poor; he is often a long-winded bore. Meanminded and petty, he's nasty to kids and quite frequently obsessed with women who have large backsides. He has remained one of his own favorite targets for scorn and satire.

Crumb rode out the decline and fall of the undergrounds. He's done record covers, gum cards, and trading cards devoted to blues singers and jazzmen. In recent years he has returned to comic books with *Weirdo*—"The Comic Magazine for Low-Life Scum"—and *Hup.* He still has a rough and raw style, and he continues to draw with the intensity of a man shouting at the top of his voice. And he still seems to be having fun.

Proving once again that there is only one R. Crumb. Copyright © 1975, 1980 Robert Crumb. Reprinted with permission of Kitchen Sink Press, Inc.

BOB DAVIS

Bob Davis had one of the briefest careers of any Golden Age artist. His work appeared for only about two years early in the 1940s, but in that short span he managed to turn out several hundred pages of comic art that was both highly effective and highly individual. He also created at least one character who came close to being a star.

Davis began his professional career as a writer. From the mid-1930s, signing himself R. B. S. Davis, he sold stories to such pulp magazines as *Ten Detective Aces.* Early in 1940 he went to work for Funnies, Inc. as an artist as well as a writer. During his first months there Davis worked exclusively for the two magazines the shop was packaging for the publishers of the *Saturday Evening Post,* who had quietly entered the comic book business under the name Novelty Press.

For *Blue Bolt* he wrote and drew the adventures of Dick Cole. The original top banana in the magazine was Blue Bolt himself, a more traditional superhero and the first character produced by the formidable team of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. When they departed, the Bolt lost some of his luster and Davis's schoolboy hero moved into the leading spot.

Although the school story was still very popular in England at the time, heroes such as Frank Merriwell were no longer admired in this country. About the only successful one was on the radio in the person of Jack Armstrong. Davis's young hero, Dick Cole, attended prestigious Farr Military Academy and had been brought up as a scientifically nurtured wonder boy by the kindly professor upon whose doorstep he'd been deposited as a baby. By mixing the traditional school yarn with newer superhero elements, Davis came up with some lively stories.

His style was cartoony, diagrammatic, and full of action. Davis characters were forever running, jumping, and exchanging punches. A typical page resembled a storyboard for a Saturday matinee serial. Both his interior and exterior shots were rich with detail; his layouts and his patient rendering of props and backdrops were akin to the work of European artists such as Herge. As a writer, Davis went in for pulp plots, full of violence and intrigue with a few boys' book trappings such as buried treasure added.

The crew at Funnies, Inc. was especially fond of battles between superguys and had staged a memorable one between the Human Torch and Sub-Mariner over in *Marvel Mystery Comics.* Davis came up with a variation of his own, which he launched in the June 1941 issue of *Blue Bolt.* A headline on the cover proclaimed, "Dick Cole *battles* his double!" Inside, Davis told readers that while kindly Professor Blair had been rearing his wonder boy, in Vienna "a quack, calling himself Herr Doktor Karno, had the self-same thought!!" To make sure his wonder boy turned out nasty, Karno got hold of an orphan, both of whose parents had been convicted murderers.

As the boy named Simba Karno grew up, he, quite naturally, developed feelings of jealousy over the good press his rival was continually getting. When Karno finally reached America and enrolled at Farr, an explosive confrontation took place. It lasted for several issues until Simba realized the error of his ways and, with the help of a bit of brain surgery, became a good guy and Dick's staunch pal.

For *Target Comics* Davis took over the Chameleon with the November 1940 issue. While the Chameleon had no superpowers and was simply an amateur detective with a gift for disguise, he was an appealing character. The idea that you could become an old man, a Chinese waiter, or a tough stevedore in a matter of minutes and fool everybody was fascinating to kids (at least it was back then). You hardly minded not being sure how to pronounce Chameleon.

Davis's storylines here also borrowed from the pulps and the movies. Among his recurrent villains were a fat sinister hypnotist—who was so effective he could even hypnotize a gorilla—and an eyepatch-wearing blackguard known as Dr. Knife.

Branching out in 1941, Davis created the shortlived Blazing Skull for Marvel's *Mystic Comics,* signing himself Mister X. The Skull was a costumed hero who fought Nazis in war-torn Europe. That same year Funnies, Inc. came up with what was probably the most ambitious battle issue of the period—*Daredevil Battles Hitler.* (This was the original Daredevil, not the later Marvel fearless avenger.) For this one-shot, Davis produced a six-page biography of Hitler, mixing text and comics. This feature was the only comic on which he used the R. B. S. Davis byline.

Davis was killed in 1942. His friend and colleague, Bill Everett, gave this account of what happened: "He met his death on his way home to Tarrytown, when he apparently went to sleep at the wheel of his car, and plunged into a shallow pond off the Saw Mill River Parkway. As I recall it, he did not drown, but died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital." Davis had been on his way home from a party in Manhattan with some of his Funnies, Inc. co-workers.

AS THEY ENTER THE GLITTERING, STAR-STUDDED THEATER — DICK, BETTY LEE, DIRECTOR MALCOLM, PROFESSOR BLAIR, AND BERT HART — THEY ARE GAY AND HAPPY; LITTLE AWARE THAT A CRUEL AND BITTER DANGER LURKS READY TO STRIKE INTO THEIR MIDST .... !!!!
ISN'T THAT THE WONDER-BOY? -DICK COLE?
HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A SWELL KID, TOO — -BUT REGULAR- Y'KNOW?
THEY SAY HE COULD BE A STAR IF HE DIDN'T LOOK SO MUCH LIKE HART.
HE SURE LOOKS LIKE BERT HART!
THEY SAY HE'S WONDERFUL IN THIS PICTURE!
-WONDER IF THEY'RE JEALOUS OF EACH OTHER?
HELLO, JIMMY!
HI, MAL!
NAW-THEY'RE PALS!
HERE WE ARE, BETTY.
LOOK! THERE'S DICK COLE
HI-DICK!
YOU'RE GETTING QUITE FAMOUS, DICK—
SHE'S VERY PRETTY.
AT LAST THE PICTURE STARTS ....
UNITED STUDIOS PRESENTS
BETTY LEE AND BERT HART IN Shining Star!
WITH SPECIAL GUEST OF DICK COLE THE WONDER BOY!
GEE!
WOW! LOOK AT THAT!
AS IT PROGRESSES, IT BECOMES OBVIOUS THAT DICK HAS STOLEN THE PICTURE ....
THE AUDIENCE IS SPELLBOUND AS THE END APPROACHES ....
ISN'T HE THRILLING!
HE'S UNBELIEVABLE
A GREAT PICTURE, TOO!
I HATE TO SEE IT END.
ALMOST OVER, NOW.
HOO-RAY!
MARVELOUS, DICK
GREAT, DICK!
EE-E-E-!
LOOK! BERT HART- MURDERED!
YOU WERE GREAT, KID!
THE PICTURE ENDS AMID TREMENDOUS APPLAUSE .... SUDDENLY THERE IS A SHRILL SHRIEK!
MURDER!
POLICE!
WHO DID IT?
HELP!
GET THE KILLER!
OH-!
MAYBE THE KID DID IT-COLE!

Dick Cole's doing his wonder-boy act in Hollywood in this ambitious page. Copyright © 1940 Funnies, Inc.

MORT DRUCKER

Drucker's early work in comic books gave little hint of what was to come. Today he's known for his humorous drawings and expert caricatures, but when he broke into comic books in the 1950s, he was a straight adventure artist specializing in war, Westerns, and romance.

Born in Brooklyn in 1929, Drucker is mostly a self-taught cartoonist. After high school he did attend the Parsons School of Design in Manhattan, but dropped out after a few months—"The emphasis was on art direction and similar areas far removed from what I was looking for." Drucker got his first professional job by answering a want ad in the *New York Times.* He was hired by Bert Whitman to assist him on his *Debbie Dean* comic strip. A comic book veteran, Whitman had launched the *Green Hornet* comic book in 1940 and had run a shop that employed such aspiring young artists as Jack Kirby. The strip was a sort of career-girl soap opera, and Drucker stayed with it for six months.

In 1952 he got a job in the art bullpen at National Periodicals, which is what DC Comics was calling itself at the time. The early 1950s was not the heyday of the superhero and DC was engaged in putting out comics in a variety of other categories. Drucker worked his way up from doing pasteups and corrections and began drawing stories of his own in a realistic, meticulous style. His major category was war yarns, and by mid-decade, his work was to be seen in such titles as *Our Army at War, Star-Spangled War Stories,* and *Our Fighting Forces.* Fortunately for the future of Drucker's career, DC was also publishing several humor titles featuring popular movie comedians of the day. Drucker worked on comics devoted to Martin and Lewis and to Bob Hope. "His ability to capture these personalities with a few brushstrokes impressed editors," observes Nick Meglin in *The Art of Humorous Illustration,* "and started him on the road to caricature."

In 1956 Drucker responded to another employment ad in the *Times* and soon signed on at *Mad.* Harvey Kurtzman and some of the other early regulars had left, and new editor Al Feldstein was looking for artists. Drucker brought in samples of his comic book work, plus a page kidding the Lone Ranger that he'd stayed up the night before to finish. Feldstein liked his stuff and took him into the office of publisher William Gaines. Gaines, whose sense of whimsy sometimes runs that way, was watching a ball game on television, and he told Drucker that if the Dodgers won he'd hire him. Apparently they did, and Drucker has been a steady contributor to *Mad* ever since.

Because of his developing knack for caricature, Drucker was assigned to illustrate the movie and television show parodies that are a staple of the magazine. Drucker has the ability to draw celebrities not only as they look in their latest publicity photos but also as they might look in the assorted ludicrous poses called for in a typical *Mad* scenario. "To keep the character looking like the same person throughout," he has said, "I study how the dominant features react in key expressions. . . . I can construct the head in various poses and still maintain a consistency in the likeness despite little or no research in these new poses." His impressive ability to produce caricatures that are both recognizable likenesses and amusing comments on the subject has brought Drucker considerable work outside comic books as well. He's done advertising art, animation, and covers for such magazines as *Time.* His artwork for *The JFK Coloring Book* in 1962 helped put the book on the best-seller lists. Teaming up with erstwhile *Mad* writer Paul Laikin in 1987, Drucker produced *The Ollie North Coloring Book*—one of the few successful pieces of merchandising to come out of the country's brief Northmania. It, too, became a best-seller. Laikin–Drucker's 1988 addition to the coloring book shelf was an opus dealing with Ronald Reagan.

Drucker entered the political arena in another way in the summer of 1982, when the comic strip *Benchley,* daily and Sunday, was launched by the Register & Tribune Syndicate. The strip was written by cartoonist Jerry Dumas and was chock-full of Drucker's deft caricatures. One admirer of the strip has described it as a "sort of gentle *Doonesbury.*" The feature ended in autumn 1986, but at its peak it was appearing in about a hundred newspapers across the country.

When asked to give some advice to young cartoonists about the tough competition they'd meet in the professional world, Drucker replied, "I say competition is exciting. It helps you learn and improve. You can't get out in front unless you're racing someone."

I . . . I told you it wasn't safe to . . . ride the subway . . . at night! Unnnngh!
BLAM BLAM
I'm here for your money!
Oh, yeah!?
All I wanted to do was . . . collect for the . . . Girl Scout cookies . . . you ordered, Mr. Krazey . . . Uggggh!
KOOKIES
COOKIES
It's amazing! Since this Vigilante Killer started, muggings are down 45%! And that's not all . . .
. . . overtime parking has dropped 63% . . .
OVERTIME
. . . litterbugging has declined 58% . . .
. . . and jay-walking has dropped 73%!!
DON'T WALK
Today, inspired by the Vigilante Killer, people are starting to defend themselves . . . like Mrs. Elsie Guerrio here! How'd you do it, Mrs. G.?
I used a hat pin! When that louse tried to take my purse, I whipped this out . . . and he just ran away!
And this experience changed your entire outlook on life . . . ?
You betcha! I'm not defenseless any more! I've got me a weapon!
What about the future, Mrs. G.?
I'm gonna become a MUGGER!!
I want a list of names of everyone in New York who's been mugged, or had a member of his family mugged!!
That's easy, Chief! Just pick up the phone book!
DEFECTIVE DIVISION

Yet another MAD spoof showing off Drucker's caricaturing skill. Copyright © 1988 William M. Gaines.

WILL ELDER

He gained fame for drawing straight adventure and wacky humor, working as a professional cartoonist for over forty years. As part of a team Elder produced stories about cowboys, Indians, and spacemen for comic books and stories about zaftig ladies for *Playboy.* On his own he was responsible for some of *Mad*'s most memorable moments.

A native of the Bronx, William W. Elder was born in 1922. He attended the High School of Music and Art in Manhattan. "I wasn't what they consider a good student," he told comics historian John Benson in a 1976 interview. "I wasn't a top-notch student, average, or even below average, because I really didn't care. . . . I wasn't getting anywhere through my grades, wasn't becoming popular as a bright student. But I noticed people looking at me. I could see myself becoming popular as a nut. The dividends were greater."

Before becoming a comic book nut, Elder served in the army during World War II. He then tried to establish himself as a successful commercial artist. In 1947 he joined up with Harvey Kurtzman—an old high school buddy—and a fellow named Charlie Stern to form an art shop with the rather sedate name of the Charles William Harvey Studio. "We decided we'd have an art studio that offered diverse services," Kurtzman has recalled. "Pasteup, layout, illustrations. . . . God, how we starved!" Other young artists rented space there; many more just dropped in to socialize. John Severin was one who had a corner of his own, and in 1948, he and Elder teamed up.

The Elder and Severin duo started working in comics during the period when such traditional characters as superheroes were no longer popular and realism was in fashion. Their earliest collaborations were on Western stories for *Prize Comics Western,* a book that had begun life in 1940 and had housed such characters as the Black Owl, the Green Lama, and Frankenstein. The team's main feature was *American Eagle,* a gritty historical Western strip with an Indian hero. They also did the Lazo Kid and the Black Bull, a masked man who went the Lone Ranger one better by wearing a sort of bull mask. The material was impressive, with Elder's inking enhancing Severin's strong penciling. "He would turn the thing into a graphically clear, clean, understandable drawing," Kurtzman has said of Elder's work at this time. "They complemented each other."

Elder and his partner went on to do science fiction—including adaptions of Ray Bradbury stories—horror, crime, and war stories for the emerging EC line. Kurtzman, who had become an editor at EC, has said, "They did some of the finest work in that partnership that was ever done in the genre of war books." In describing how he and Severin worked together, Elder said, "John Severin was a remarkable artist as far as drawing uniforms, soldiers. He had a great sense of history. . . . John at that time didn't have the ability to dramatize it in black and white, and I did. . . . I was very fast with the inking and dramatization of the stories, and together we seemed to work very well and very rapidly."

Mad was launched in the summer of 1952, a ten-cent, full-color comic book at the start, with Kurtzman as editor. Elder contributed solo to *Mad* from the first issue onward. His comedy style blended elements of Kurtzman, Bill Holman (the man responsible for the screwball comic strip *Smokey Stover*), animated cartoons of the zany Tex Avery sort, Basil Wolverton, and the straight adventure things he'd been doing. He managed to Osterize all this into a distinctive look of his own. "I was always a cutup," he told Benson, "and I felt that if I could expose this zaniness, this bottled-up zaniness in me, in some kind of medium, I would really burst forth. . . . *Mad* gave me a tremendous amount of license." One of Elder's specialties was parody, and he drew burlesques—cluttered with props, peculiar people, funny signs, and other bits of cultural effluvia—of Sherlock Holmes, *Dragnet,* Archie, the Shadow, and other popular media icons. He also worked for EC's *Panic.*

When Kurtzman and EC parted company in the mid-1950s, Elder left, too. Thereafter he was to be seen in such shortlived Kurtzman ventures as *Trump, Humbug,* and *Help!* This latter humor magazine held on from 1960 to 1962, and while it lasted Elder worked with Kurtzman on the adventures of a naïve lad named Goodman Beaver. Beaver, whom Kurtzman thought of as a Candide sort, encountered Superman, Tarzan, and a variety of fads and foibles of the times. "That was the greatest time of my life," Elder has said of the Goodman Beaver years. "I really enjoyed it. . . . It had the freedom, the feeling to express yourself." Working in black and white, Elder went in for a more patient rendering and produced some impressive pages.

Little Annie Fanny, created for *Playboy* in 1962, also starred a wide-eyed innocent in a crass world. Over the years, Elder and Kurtzman have been the basic creative team on the feature, which still runs occasionally.

CRIME DEPT: LAMONT SHADOWSKEEDEEBOOMBOOM, WEALTHY YOUNG MAN ABOUT TOWN, HAS LONG AGO IN THE ORIENT LEARNED A SECRET HYPNOTIC POWER TO CLOUD MEN'S MINDS! HIS FRIEND AND COMPANION, MARGO PAIN, IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO KNOWS TO WHOM THE VOICE OF THE INVISIBLE SHADOWSKEEDEEBOOMBOOM BELONGS! MARGO CALLS HIM, FOR SHORT...
SHADOW!
I, AM MARGO PAIN... FRIEND AND COMPANION!
KEFAUVER CRIME COMMITTEE
JUST DON'T MESS AROUND WITH ME, BOYS, 'CAUSE I'M THE ONLY PERSON WHO KNOWS TO WHOM THE VOICE OF THE INVISIBLE SHADOWSKEEDEEBOOMBOOM BELONGS!
I'M LOOKING FOR THIS GUY, SEE! COMPLETELY INVISIBLE, SEE!... IMPOSSIBLE TO DETECT, SEE, WITH THE NAKED EYE, SEE!
...ANY YOU GUYS SEEN HIM?
A FRIEND AND COMPANION OF THE SHADOW IS NO FRIEND OF OURS!
NYAH-HAH-HAH-HAH!

A fine eye for detail is needed to catch all of Elder's humor here. Copyright © 1988 William M. Gaines.

BILL ELY

A comic book artist for over three decades, Ely never drew a superhero or a funny animal. He entered comics in the 1930s and stayed on until the 1970s, devoting himself to a wide range of realistically drawn adventure features—everything from private eyes to Zorro.

He was born in 1919 and studied art at the Pratt Institute in New York City. He helped finance his studies by doing some illustrations for the pulp fiction magazines. Early in 1937 he heard that Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson was looking for artists for his fledgling line of comic books; so, along with his friend Jim Chambers, another young artist, Ely dropped in on the major's offices. Both were hired at the rate of $5 a page, and soon went to work for *More Fun Comics* and *New Adventure Comics.* Although he worked for the major for most of the year, Ely never met him. After Nicholson was forced to sell out to DC, the page rate went up to $6.

Then Ely heard that Whitman was offering $7.50 per page. After dropping in on editor/artist/writer Oskar Lebeck, Ely was hired to draw for *Popular Comics.* Ely's earliest work had been somewhat in the Milton Caniff style, but when he moved over to *Popular* and began drawing the *Hurricane Kids,* he developed a style that was much more his own. The feature dealt with a couple of lads who were shipwrecked on an island that was densely populated with prehistoric creatures, and Ely was very good at depicting each and every one of them.

While drawing for *Popular,* Ely worked out of his family home in White Plains, New York, which is a short commute from Manhattan. The place had once been a country club and Ely drew in a corner of what was formerly the ballroom. From the window he could see the empty swimming pool and the overgrown tennis courts that nobody at the tail end of the Depression was able to keep up. Other comic book contributors hung out and sometimes worked there—including Chambers, Tom Hickey, and Alden McWilliams. Editor Lebeck often dropped in to gather up artwork and to pass out checks.

Military service interrupted Ely's career in 1943. When he returned after the war, he again worked for Whitman/Dell. His style had become tighter, more detailed—well suited to the realistic crime and detective features he did during this period. He drew a one-shot Zorro book in 1949, before the California masked man became a Disney property. In the early 1950s Ely also worked for the Hillman outfit, doing true crime stuff for such magazines as *Real Clue.*

In the mid-1950s he returned to DC. The fact that he'd worked there during the company's startup days "didn't mean anything," and Ely sometimes even felt his being a DC oldtimer was a disadvantage. Nevertheless, for the next dozen years he was one of their most prolific and reliable artists in the crime, horror, fantasy, and science fiction categories. He drew numerous stories for *House of Secrets, House of Mystery,* and others. He stayed clear of superheroes; one of his few series characters was Rip Hunter, Time Master.

Ely left DC again in 1966 and returned to Whitman—which by this time was calling itself Gold Key. There he contributed to such titles as *Ripley's Believe It Or Not.* By the mid-1970s he was gone from comic books. Since then he has devoted himself full time to painting. His specialty is landscape painting and he's produced many impressive canvases of New England scenes. He makes a comfortable living this way and the work is fun—something he wasn't always able to say about his comic book jobs.

HURRICANE KIDS

SUDDENLY JAGGED ROCKS RISE OUT OF THE BLACK SEA --
BREAKERS AHEAD! SHEER OFF, BULLY!
CHANCING COURSE THE SCHOONER STRIKES ON A HIDDEN REEF. THE MASTS HAVE BEEN TORN FROM THEIR STEPS --
STILL ROPED TO THE MAST, ALAN ESCAPES INJURY --
WOW! I'M GLAD THIS MAST DIDN'T FALL ON TOP OF ME!
GIANT WAVES LIFT THE HALF WRECKED VESSEL CLEAR OF THE ROCK ---
MAN THE HELM! THE SCHOONER'S DRIFTIN' FREE AGAIN!
THE SHIP'S TAKIN' WATER!
HER BOTTOM'S TORN OUT ON THAT REEF!
WE'RE SINKIN'!
ABANDON SHIP! MAN THE LIFEBOAT!
HOW ABOUT THAT KID WE TIED TO THE MAST, BULLY?
LET HIM DROWN! SHOVE OFF FROM THE HULK, BUTCHER!

Ely treats his two favorite subjects, pirates and the sea, in this *Hurricane Kids* page.
Copyright © 1942 R.S. Callender.

KEN ERNST

Before he became the artist on one of the most successful soap opera strips ever done, Ernst had an active career in comic books. Another dedicated disciple of Milton Caniff and Noel Sickles, he brought a sophisticated, newspaper-strip look to Golden Age magazines that often settled for much less professional work.

Kenneth Frederic Ernst was born in 1918. "This singular event took place in the little mining town of Stanton, Illinois, at the height of the worst snowstorm in the history of the state," he once recalled. "By the time I was six my folks had settled on Chicago's West Side." His father ran a delicatessen, which was just around the corner from the garage where, in 1929, the St. Valentine's Day Massacre occurred. As Ernst recalled, several of the Bugs Moran mobsters killed that day were good customers of his father's.

Ernst's father financed his first mail-order cartoon course, but by the time Ernst was twelve, he had also become fascinated with magic. "I actually performed for pay in my teens," he said. "Some cartoons I did for the local magic club magazine caught the eye of a fellow magician who was a commercial artist by profession, and he persuaded me to take up the study of art and cartooning seriously." He attended the Chicago Art Institute days and the Academy of Fine Art by night. He then got his first professional cartooning job on a second-rate fantasy strip called *Peter Pen,* assisting an artist named Nick Nichols.

He got into comic books in 1936, back when very few publishers thought much money could be made with this sort of upstart periodical and only a handful of titles could be found on the newsstands. Leaving the Chicago area, Ernst came to New York City and lived there for about a year. During that period he was part of the shop run by the enterprising packager Harry "A" Chesler. His sister occasionally worked as an artist's model for Caniff and Sickles, and Ernst visited their Tudor City studio several times. These two artists were major influences on him and he developed a loose, splashy version of their style. His earliest comic book work, done while he was still a teenager, appeared in such pioneering titles as *Funny Pages* and *Star Comics.*

Late in the 1930s he returned to Chicago. By traveling to nearby Racine, Wisconsin, he could sell material to the Whitman line of funny books—*Crackajack, The Funnies,* and *Super Comics.* His most successful comic book feature was *Magic Morro* for *Super,* a magazine that mixed reprints of *Dick Tracy, Terry and the Pirates,* and others with original stuff. Initially Morro hung out on a desert island and was "versed in magic and sorcery." He looked like a blond Tarzan and was a much better magician than Mandrake. Ernst had found his own style by this point, and *Magic Morro,* which he also wrote, looked and read like the slick newspaper adventure strips that Caniff and his disciples were turning out.

Working through the mail, Ernst also sold to New York publishers. For *Big Shot Comics* he drew *Tom Kerry,* about a tough DA; and for DC's *Detective Comics* there was *Larry Steele,* about a tough private eye. Audacious in those days, Ernst drew one episode of *Larry Steele* wherein several framed paintings of nude women were prominently displayed on the walls of the murder victim's home. Whitman was publishing the fat novels called Big Little Books, and Ernst illustrated several of those as well, chiefly volumes featuring Western movie heroes Buck Jones and Tom Mix.

Having gotten married, Ernst decided he needed an extra job. He signed on to work on the *Don Winslow* newspaper strip. The new position didn't pay all that much, so he held on to his freelance work. "At one time I spent mornings penciling all the *Winslow* and *Bos'n Hal* art," he recalled, "afternoons at a Chicago art agency doing advertising strips, and topped off the day by working all evening on my own comic book creations." The appearance of *Winslow* changed with his advent. By the end of 1940 the strip had lost the cartoony appearance it had in its early years. Long shots, closeups, and other movie-type setups became frequent. Ernst was especially fond of shooting up from floor level and, as Orson Welles was about to do in the movies, showing the ceiling. He staged action better than most of his predecessors, and when he left, after two years, chief artist Leon Beroth struggled, with assorted help and varied results, to keep the strip looking the way it had when Ernst drew it.

Mary Worth had been around, under various names, for several years. Allen Saunders, the writer, was looking for a new artist and Ernst's editor at Whitman recommended him. He joined on in 1942 and it was his artwork, along with Saunders's slick scripts, that pushed the strip to a top position. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s every new soap opera strip that came along tried to look like *Mary Worth.*

Ernst was still associated with the strip when he died in 1985.

COMRADES! WE MADE IT!
IF I TAKE A RUNNING...
...LEAP!...
...I MIGHT GRAB A WHEEL!
T-THE SHIP'S STALLING, MASTER!
NO WONDER! THAT FOOL'S HANGING FROM OUR LANDING GEAR!
RETRACT OUR WHEELS, KILLER! THEN WATCH THAT PARASITE PLUNGE!
AS THE HEAVY WHEELS BEGIN TO PULL TOWARD THE FUSELAGE MORRO SENSES HIS DANGER!
I CAN'T STAY HERE AND THERE'S WATER BELOW SO...
...THANKS FOR THE BUGGY RIDE!

Plenty of action and hints of the slickness Ernst would bring to the soap opera strip.
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CREIG FLESSEL

Although he devoted relatively few years of his long career as a professional artist to comic books, Flessel played an important part in their development. He was there almost from the beginning, providing stories and covers for the earliest DC titles. He worked on some of the early costumed heroes, contributed to the very first true crime comic, and stuck around long enough to arouse the ire of such critics as Dr. Fredric Wertham.

Flessel was born in Huntington, Long Island, in 1912. He studied at both the Grand Central Art School and Pratt Institute in New York City. As soon as he got out of school, he went to work doing illustrations for pulp fiction magazines such as the *Shadow, Crime Busters,* and *Adventure.* When Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, the dapper founder of the company that became DC, ran ads in the New York City newspapers, Flessel was one of those who responded. Unlike some of the contributors to the major's *More Fun Comics* and *New Adventure,* he usually got paid.

"Well, I figured all the comics were a fly-by-night thing at that time," he explains. "So I figured I'd sit right there and do it, so I made a space in the office. . . . And the major, he was in and out, being chased by process servers." More an illustrator than a cartoonist, Flessel specialized in adventure strips and drew and wrote—"Everybody wrote his own stuff, mainly, at that time"—such features as *Steve Conrad, Pep Morgan,* and *Speed Saunders.* This latter character, a waterfront plainclothes cop, was one of the stars of *Detective Comics* in the innocent days before the advent of Batman. Flessel soon became the major's star cover artist, drawing both cute kid stuff—what he now refers to as "warmed-over Norman Rockwell"—and more dashing stuff featuring explorers, Foreign Legionnaires, pirates, and other assorted heroic stereotypes. This was, mostly, in the days before superheroes, and Flessel's handsome covers served as provocative packages rather than as showcases for specific characters or situations to be found within. Since he was a very good artist, his covers lent a definite touch of class to the major's struggling list of titles.

When Major Nicholson was relieved of his duties in 1938, Flessel stayed on with the new owners of Detective Comics, Inc. He took over the *Sandman* in *Adventure Comics* in 1939 and added the *Shining Knight* for the same magazine in 1941. He did some of his most impressive work on this fantasy, which starred one of King Arthur's knights who is brought back to life and fights crime.

Flessel has said that he never had much faith in comic books as a lifetime occupation. He, therefore, always made it a policy to work in other areas as well. He put in a stretch assisting on the *Dixie Dugan* newspaper strip and also tried advertising. By the time he was drawing the *Shining Knight,* he decided he wanted to concentrate more on the ad game. He joined Johnstone & Cushing, an art service that provided ads in cartoon and comic strip format for advertising agencies. He soon became one of their most prolific and most sought-after artists. His specialty was still comics, but now Flessel drew strips and pages for such clients as Ralston and Campbell's Soup. Throughout the 1940s he also did a page called *Adventures of R.C. and Quickie* for Royal Crown Cola. It mixed plenty of action with plenty of hard sell—"That's right, Quickie, it's the best-tasting cola in the world!"—and ran in most of the major comic book titles of the era.

A friend of Charles Biro's, Flessel managed to fit in some jobs for the cartoonist/editor's *Crime Does Not Pay,* the true crime funny book that came along in 1942 and paved the way for the sex and violence comics that emerged in the immediate postwar years. For an issue of *True Crime,* one of those postwar comics, Flessel drew a yarn that opened with a scene of two live hoodlums being dragged along over a gravel roadway while tied to the rear end of a roaring gangster automobile. Critics of comic books, of which there were many in these years, singled this panel out for scorn and it was even reprinted in Dr. Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent.*

In addition to his advertising, Flessel kept doing occasional comic book jobs. In 1948 he helped out on Siegel and Shuster's ill-fated *Funnyman,* and in the 1950s he drew both *Superboy* and *Jungle Jim.* In 1960 he assumed the drawing of the soap opera strip *David Crane* and stuck with it till the end. He's still active in various areas of art, having recently even contributed to *Playboy.* As for his comic book days, he says, "It was a lot of fun, I met a lot of nice guys. But I didn't believe I had any future in it."

CRIME DOES NOT PAY
I CAN TELL YOU'RE NO NEW YORKER, SON, BUT I LIKE YOUR NERVE.. WHO ARE YA? WHERE DO YA HAIL FROM?
MY NAME'S DIAMOND, MISTER, BUT CALL ME "LEGS" FOR SHORT... PHILLY'S WHERE I BEEN HANGING MY HATS
ISN'T THIS JUST SWELL, BOYS! MATTY HERE WAS LOOKING FOR A SMART KID TO HELP!
CRIME
AND YOU, LEGS, ARE IT! WHY, MATTY BROWN IS THE SNOOTIEST GANGSTER IN TOWN! HE'LL SET YOU RIDING HIGH WITH A PACK FULL OF CASH!
CRIME
HA, HA - HISTORY HAS NEVER SEEN A BETTER COMBINATION! THOSE TWO GOT ALONG LIKE FATHER AND SON!
SEE, KID, YOU SLIP THE ACE IN HERE!
MEET LEGS, BILL!
GLAD T' KNOW YA, KID!
EVERY EVIL CARD TRICK MATTY KNEW HE TAUGHT LEGS!
"MONARCHS OF THE UNDERWORLD WERE INTRODUCED TO THE YOUNG CRIMINAL TO BE!"
YOU'RE ALL SET, MY BOY! I EXPECT BIG THINGS OF YOU!
"TIME SWEPT BY AND WHEN THE BOOTLEG BUSINESS HIT BIG TIME, DIAMOND WAS ON THE INSIDE..."
"GUNS!! WHY BEFORE A MONTH HAD PASSED, LEGS COULD BORE A QUARTER AT TWENTY YARDS!"
"I THOUGHT LEGS WOULD BE A BIG TIMER THEN, BUT LITTLE DID I REALIZE HOW BIG....."

Flessel proving that Crime Does Not Pay. Copyright © 1943 Comic House, Inc.

GILL FOX

Before he was out of his teens, Gill Fox was a professional cartoonist and he's still active today, over a half-century later. The comic book business was just getting started in the mid-1930s when Fox broke in. Before he moved on to newspaper syndication he drew everything from comic book humor fillers to superhero covers. He also did his share of Good Girl Art and edited comic books, hiring the likes of Lou Fine and Jack Cole.

Like many another veteran cartoonist, the Brooklyn-born Fox learned the basics of his trade by way of the Landon School correspondence course. Among the other alumni of the mail-order school are Milton Caniff, Roy Crane, and Noel Sickles. He also studied art in high school and, while still a teenager, got himself a job with the Max Fleischer animation studio, which was located in Manhattan in those days. He heard about the new comic books that were being launched while at Fleischer. "Every guy in the inking department was a young, hungry guy who had aspirations to be a cartoonist," he explains. "And we knew every trick and every market that opened up."

After a spell of freelancing, he went into the shop of Harry "A" Chesler, who was packaging comic books for various fledgling lines. As soon as he spotted Chesler's newspaper ad asking for artists, Fox rushed over with his portfolio. "I can remember standing in front of his desk and he looked at the pages, and he says, 'You got the job,' " recalls Fox. " 'You start Monday.' I got so excited my nose started to bleed."

While with Chesler he turned out mostly nonfiction "Ripley-type pages and Hollywood stuff." Quite a few other talented young fellows worked there with him. "There was Charlie Biro, Bob Wood," says Fox. "Ken Ernst was there briefly, not too long. Running the place about six months after I'd been there was Jack Binder. Jack Cole was there . . . the kid, Fred Schwab. Rafael Astarita. Oh, and Fred Guardineer."

He left the shop after a year or so, went through a bleak few months, and then signed on with Everett M. "Busy" Arnold, publisher of *Feature Comics, Smash Comics, Crack Comics,* and others. "I was riding on the Lexington Avenue bus. I knew Arnold's address and, instinctively, something told me to get off the bus and go up there with no appointment," as Fox tells it. "And I did . . . and saw Ed Cronin, who was editing. That's how the whole thing started. I came up with *Wun Cloo.*"

Wun Cloo was a Chinese private eye, billed as the Defective Detective. After him came *Slaphappy Pappy, Poison Ivy,* and other filler features—usually taking up just one or two pages—that revealed Fox as a humorist with a broad, somewhat audacious approach. He had a young man's humor, wild and unabashedly lowbrow, similar in spirit to what his friend Jack Cole was up to at the time. Soon Fox was made an editor, in charge of such Arnold titles as *Police Comics,* whose star performer was Cole's Plastic Man. Fox drew numerous covers, utilizing a more serious style to depict the actions of Plastic Man, Dollman, and the Black Condor.

Fox left comics to go into the army, serving in the Sixty-third Infantry Division. Eventually he worked as a cartoonist on the service newspaper *Stars and Stripes* in Europe. Back with Arnold in 1946, he drew more humor features and had a turn drawing the sexy blonde Torchy. Torchy was Bill Ward's creation, and Fox was asked to help meet the increased demand for material when Torchy got a book of her own. "Now, I was still very conservative in my thinking," says Fox, "but I loved drawing pretty girls." He left comic books in the early 1950s, after drawing the teenager Candy.

He had joined Johnstone & Cushing in 1950 to draw advertising comics and strips. While there he displayed an impressive versatility, an ability to work well in a wide variety of styles. This capacity served him well when he collaborated with writer Selma Diamond on a moderately realistic newspaper strip called *Jeanie* from 1952 to 1954, on a panel titled *Wilbert,* and on a Sunday page for the New York *News* called *Bumper to Bumper.* In 1961 Fox became the artist on the long-running NEA gag panel *Side Glances,* a job that called for mastering yet another style. He felt he'd now achieved one of his major goals, to draw a successful syndicated feature. That success allowed him to achieve another of his goals, a home in rural Connecticut. He remained with the panel until it was retired in 1980. Fox continues to be versatile—drawing political cartoons, providing art for advertising and, something he's devoted more time to in recent years, illustrating children's books.

NEXT DAY, BERGER'S MEN START TO WRECK ALL BLACK INK!
INK
INK
EVENING BURP
EXTRA
BLACK INK FAMINE ON!
COMIC CHARACTERS DIE BY THOUSANDS
GONE!
IT CERTAINLY LOOKS BAD, POISON... WITHOUT BLACK INK, I LOSE MY JOB AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS I CAN'T DRAW YOU ANYMORE!
WE AIN'T LICKED YET!
HI, YA, BOYS.. I GOT YA IN A TOUGH SPOT, EH?
BERGER!
I'LL GRAB HIS CANE!
BERGER IS THROWN OFF BALANCE..
NOW WHILE HAM IS UNCONSCIOUS I'LL REMOVE BOTH HIS SOCKS!
OKAY, GILL.. NOW LET ME HAVE A BIG POT OF BOILING WATER!
HERE'S TH' WATER, POISON!
NEXT, I TOSS BERGER'S SOCKS INTO TH' HOT WATER!
AFTER ALL, POISON.. I'M TH' GUY THAT DRAWS THIS STRIP SO HOW ABOUT LETTIN' ME IN ON TH' GAG!
WHEN I'M FINISHED STIRRING THIS, I'LL TELL YA!
IT WORKED! LOOK... ALL THE JET BLACK INK YA KIN USE, ALL FROM TH' SOCKS OF TH' GUY WHO CAUSED TH' INK SHORTAGE!!

The formidable Poison Ivy, and Gill Fox himself, deal with an unusual dilemma.

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BOB FUJITANI

During the Golden Age phase of his career, he signed himself Bob Fuje. As Fuje, he was responsible for drawing a wide range of superheroes and crimebusters, as well as out-and-out crooks, fiends, and monsters. He mellowed some in the 1950s and 1960s, turning to somewhat more sedate material, and then devoted a great many years to working on the *Flash Gordon* newspaper strip.

Fujitani grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut. He won a scholarship to the American School of Design in Manhattan, and while he was there he heard that Will Eisner's shop was looking for artists. He spent his first months out of school, in the early 1940s, working for Eisner. Among his chores was the inking of some of Lou Fine's work on *Uncle Sam* in *National Comics,* the *Black Condor* in *Crack Comics,* and the *Ray* in *Smash Comics.* When Fine moved on, Fujitani took over most of his assignments and also drew the adventures of a handsome, heroic cab driver named Hack O'Hara. His early solo work was distinctly in the Lou Fine style.

But before too long Fujitani developed a look of his own, with leaner, elongated figures and unusual layouts. He did some of his grimmest and most distinctive work for MLJ's *Pep Comics,* already the home of Archie but still emphasizing costumed heroes. Artist Harry Lucey had noticed his work and hired him to ink for him. Lucey's major character was the Hangman. A costumed crimefighter, Hangman specialized in bringing grim retribution to crazed stranglers, misshapen fiends, and similar malefactors. Fujitani eventually inherited the feature, rendering the hooded avenger's exploits in a shadowy *film-noir* fashion. During the mid-1940s he did similar, slightly surreal work on such features as the *Zebra* and *Shock Gibson* in various Harvey titles and on *Cat-Man,* who starred in a magazine of his own. *Air Fighters Comics,* the home of Airboy and the Heap, offered a blend of aviation thrills, sexy women, and horror. It was aimed, during the World War II years, at teenage boys and horny GIs. Fujitani drew several features for the comic, including *Black Angel* and *Sky Wolf.*

He moved into newspaper strips in 1945, using the same shadowy style on a daily crime strip called *Judge Wright.* The strip was not a hit and Fujitani had no guaranteed salary. His share of the profits usually came to $35 a week. When he realized he would never earn more than that, he quit. He'd used the penname Bob Wells on the strip.

Fujitani returned to comic books, and by the late 1940s, he had left superheroes behind. Now he adopted a more realistic approach to draw for *Crime Does Not Pay.* Since artist/editor Charles Biro favored wordy scripts and simplified drawing, Fujitani had to abandon his tricky angle shots and his expert use of deep shadows. He did interesting work for Biro, but the dark, fantasy-oriented look was gone. He also contributed tough true crime stories to such comic books as *Real Clue.*

He modified his style again in the late 1950s, when he went to work for Western/Gold Key. His stuff was more conventional now, politer and slicker. Fujitani drew *Prince Valiant, Sherlock Holmes,* and the rather bland *Dr. Solar.* By the mid-1960s he was out of comic books. He spent the next two decades working on *Flash Gordon* with artist Dan Barry. He eventually got a credit and for a good part of the time he was pretty much responsible for producing the daily strip. In 1986, after cartooning professionally for well over four decades, Fujitani retired.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN
AND THE NAZI TERRORIST WHO DIED.... BUT REALLY LIVED AGAIN - WITHOUT A SOUL!
DEATH IS INSPECTOR HARTLEIN'S SHADOW... FOR HE IS OF THE DREADED GESTAPO! ...FOR ONE BULLET-SWEPT HOUR, IT IS HARTLEIN AGAINST THE FLYING DUTCHMAN ....WITH A DUTCH TOWN AT STAKE!
B. Fuji

Fujitani during his *grand guignol* period. Copyright © 1942 Hillman Periodicals.

JOE GALLAGHER

During a career that lasted less than five years, Joe Gallagher drew such leading characters as the Flash, the Spectre, and Sandman, as well as such lesser lights as Wildcat, the Atom, and the King. The most sought-after items he was involved with are the issues of *All Star Comics* he worked on from 1942 to 1946. For these he drew the introductions and conclusions, wherein the members of the Justice Society convened, along with several covers and individual character episodes. An interesting and highly individual artist, Gallagher dropped out of comics in the mid-1940s.

He had a proletarian style, one that was somewhat in conflict with the costumed crimefighter sort of stories he was called on to illustrate. It was a native American style, one that was not overly academic and owed nothing to slick magazine illustration or even to what was being done in newspaper comics. Gallagher had worked out a personal, streetwise approach to drawing and was more akin to such earlier artists as John Sloan, Reginald Marsh, and William Gropper than he was to anyone working in comics.

His stories are rich with the props and locations of the meaner edge of big city life. Ashcans and alleys, street cleaners, pushcarts, junk wagons, tenements and shanties, pool halls, junkyards, mom-and-pop grocery stores, lampposts and fire hydrants. The hydrant was one of Gallagher's trademarks; he seems to have drawn them more often than any other cartoonist of the period, except possibly Will Eisner. He managed to stick at least a couple into just about every six- and eight-page story he did.

He didn't take a lyrical approach to drawing adventure material, favoring a gritty, cartoony look. He had a swift, shorthand approach to action, suggesting more than he showed. He exaggerated and foreshortened his figures, using movie techniques to frame them as they interacted. He used odd angle shots and long shots and was also fond of shooting from the ground level up or peering down from above. Although his manner of telling a story was often a bit eccentric, Gallagher got his action to flow from panel to panel, and it's evident he designed each page as a totality rather than just an accumulation of boxes. While he was capable of drawing the Atom or Wildcat looking both formidable and graceful, Gallagher's subsidiary characters come off as closer to caricatures of real-life types than as figures in a heroic epic. His people are squatty most often, decked out in baggy clothes. Even his villains are rarely elegant.

Joe Gallagher's first comic book work was done in fall 1941 for *Military Comics.* In issues #4 and #5 he drew five-page adventures of Miss America, a red, white, and blue superlady. Next he showed up over at the Ace line of comics in spring 1942, where he contributed to such magazines as *4 Favorites, Lightning Comics,* and *Super-Mystery.* He drew a few adventures of Magno and Davey, yet another costumed superhero-and-boy-sidekick team, and was responsible for a handful of covers, too.

By summer 1942 Gallagher had joined the All-American division of DC, an outfit he would work for exclusively for the last four years he was in comics. Sheldon Mayer was his editor. "[Gallagher] was incredibly talented," Mayer has said. "There was a lot of electricity in his work, it was full of vigor and life." When asked what Gallagher looked like, he replied, "I remember him very well. I could even draw him for you right now. A tall boy . . . he wasn't overly heavy or anything like that, but he was large-boned. Well, you know, he was like the guys he drew. He could've been working in a mine or a steel mill. . . . He had the nose to go with it. Although I don't think he was ever really in a fight, his nose always looked like it had been broken. He had a fighter's face." Mayer believes Gallagher was no older than his early twenties when he first came around.

Gallagher took over the Atom from the character's less-than-inspired creators, Ben Flinton and Bill O'Connor, in *All-American Comics* #42 (September 1942). This was the old original Atom, redheaded college boy Al Pratt, who shed "his meek personality for that of the compact little bundle of muscles." Around the same time, Gallagher began drawing the Atom in *All-Star* as well. Mayer soon gave him more work to do, and he added *Red, White and Blue* for *All-American* and the King for *Flash Comics.* The first was about a soldier, sailor, and marine team who fought spies and saboteurs; the other dealt with a master of disguise. Gallagher's last regular feature was Wildcat in *Sensation Comics.* His work became increasingly sketchy and hurried-looking on these adventures of the boxer/crimefighter.

As Mayer recalls, Gallagher was "supporting four or five little brothers and sisters . . . trying to keep welfare from splitting them up." Quite probably these pressures had an effect on his drawing. His final Wildcat ran in the June 1946 issue of *Sensation.* Gallagher left comics forever at that point. "I never found out what happened to him," Mayer has said. "He seemed to vanish into thin air."

ACTION ADVENTURE THRILLS
APR.
SUPER-MYSTERY
COMICS
10¢
The Cobra's poisoned nails clawed closer to the girl's throat as Magno and Davey crashed through the tunnel to save her.
GALLAGHER
ALL STARS—MAGNO AND DAVEY • VULCAN • BUCKSKIN
THE BLACK ACE • CAPTAIN GALLANT • PEE WEE WILSON

Down in the sewers with Magno and Davy. This is one of the few covers Gallagher did during his brief career. Copyright © 1942 Periodical House, Inc.

DAVE GIBBONS

A single comic book series pushed Gibbons, another British import, into a prominent position among comic book artists. That was *Watchmen,* a twelve-part enterprise put forth by DC, beginning in the summer of 1986. Gibbons's rise over the past two years is yet another indication of how the comic book business has been changing. *Watchmen,* written by the ubiquitous Englishman Alan Moore, is not for kids. The fantasy is crowded with sex and violence; it takes political stands; and it presents a jaded and cynical view of the idea of costumed crimefighters and superheroes. The whole complex saga extends Stan Lee's concept of the flawed hero about as far as it can go. Gibbons's drawing on *Watchmen* is as grownup as the writing strives to be, it has brought him considerable attention and glowing reviews in both fanzines and mainstream publications. There have been awards, too.

Interestingly enough, a major influence in Gibbons's youth was the *Mad* work of Wally Wood and Will Elder—far from serious stuff. "I would have to cite Wally Wood as one of my early influences, and indeed, for quite a large portion of my formative years, probably my favorite artist," he told Bhob Stewart in a 1987 *Comics Journal* interview. He was particularly impressed by Wood's parody of Superman—"I love the feeling of weight and bulk and substance that Wally Wood gave the characters." Other favorites were Elder's parodies of Sherlock Holmes, Frankenstein, and *Dragnet.* "Quite a lot of stuff I did when I was a kid was humorous stuff," he's said. "*Mad*-style parodies of British TV programs and British comic book characters. . . . Some of the early stuff I did when I was breaking into comics was a peculiar institution they have in British comics where they get readers to send in jokes . . . and I used to actually collate those into a page of jokes, redraw the readers' ideas. And those were always real sort of big-foot humor." Eventually Gibbons moved on to more serious fare, drawing for *2000 A.D., Robo-Hunter,* and *Dr. Who.* In 1979 he drew the British adventures of the Hulk.

Gibbons started working for DC, chiefly through the mail, in 1982. He drew such perennials as Batman, Dr. Fate, Superman and the Green Lantern. And finally came *Watchmen.* Although the first issue didn't hit the stands until summer 1986, the series was years in the making. *Amazing Heroes*'s fat Preview Issue, cover dated January 1, 1985, had an entry on *Watchmen.* "What we're going to do is to look at the superhero myth from a different angle," scripter Moore was quoted as saying. "I think that if these people really existed the world wouldn't be such a nice optimistic place, as most comics pretend it would. It would be desperate, dangerous, and mad." The *Amazing Heroes* gang remained patient champions of the project and, in June 1986, ran a long preview piece and dubbed *Watchmen* "the most eagerly awaited new comic title this summer." Along with the article explaining Moore's concept—one that included, among other things, nuclear jitters, an alternate universe, and a group of heroes that sounded like a Justice League for psychopaths—were numerous sketches and drawings by Gibbons.

He'd apparently put in considerable time and effort on designing each character and also did detailed thumbnail breakdowns of each page. Like the better European artists, Gibbons favors a very cinematic approach to storytelling—planning his long shots, overhead shots, closeups, and so on very carefully. And he is very good at spotting the right details, props, and backgrounds.

Watchmen turned out to be worth the wait. It sold well and garnered good reviews. *Comics Journal* picked it as one of the ten best comic books of the year, along with *Elektra: Assassin, Batman Year One,* and others. A graphic novel paperback, collecting all twelve issues, appeared in 1987, and there have been movie offers. "*Watchmen* is a comic about comics," Gibbons has said, looking back. "I think that to confront the issues of comics in a comic world was quite an exciting thing to do." Recently, he has been working on comic book adaptions of Bible stories and there's a possibility of new *Watchmen*-type material.

Doctor Strange starts his day with an ominous beginning. Copyright © 1988 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

JEAN GIRAUD (MOEBIUS)

A great many highly gifted comic book artists have been at work in Europe for years. Giraud has been *two* of them. At long last his work is being reprinted in America and a wider audience has been able to see what he's accomplished both as Gir and as Moebius.

Jean Giraud was born in Paris in 1938 and broke into comics there in 1954. After a stint in the service he went to work for French cartoonist Joseph Gillain, who signed his work Jije. The American West has long fascinated Europeans, and in 1954 Giraud created *Jerry Spring,* a cowboy opus, for *Spirou* magazine. When Giraud joined him in 1960, he worked as assistant on *Jerry Spring.* He has said that Gillain taught him not to swipe and to draw from life as much as possible. After leaving Gillain, Giraud teamed up with writer Jean-Michel Charlier to do a Western of his own. This was the *Lt. Blueberry* series that appeared in *Pilote* magazine and then was reprinted in a series of albums by Dargaud.

Working in a style that was a bolder variation of Gillain's, and signing himself Gir, he drew some very impressive stuff. His layouts and staging were imaginative—horses, Indians, beautiful women, weapons, grizzled owlhoots, jaded cavalrymen—and executed with ease and grace. He's remarked that "I was trained to do a synthesis of Hal Foster, Alex Raymond, and Milton Caniff." But Giraud soon equaled—and, in some instances, excelled—his influences. His pages looked like storyboards for a very good Western movie, effectively moving from telling closeups to awesome long shots. John Ford and Sergio Leone seem also to have been influences. Blueberry himself looked, and sometimes acted, like the then popular actor Jean-Paul Belmondo.

Some American fans took notice of Giraud's work almost as soon as it began appearing. Writing in *Graphic Story World* in 1971, Fred Patten gave a glowing review to four of the Blueberry albums. "Giraud's spectacular landscapes of the Western plains and the Rocky Mountains are detailed and accurate," he wrote. "His sketches of the Sioux are based on nineteenth-century photographs and portraits. The cavalry uniforms are what the cavalry was wearing in 1868. Everything isn't all neat and pretty, either. His characters on the trail show a realistic amount of sweat and dirt and several days' growth of whiskers when appropriate. . . . Giraud obviously puts much work into each page. When balanced against American Western comic books the superiority is stunning." Although the albums were printed in French, they were purchased by many in this country who couldn't even read the language—for Giraud's artwork alone.

Lt. Blueberry proved to be a hit, eventually appearing in more than two dozen albums. It was, Giraud has said, "a big commercial success, but I wanted to do something a little bit more different." In the late 1960s he branched out and became Moebius as well as Gir, borrowing his pen name from the nineteenth-century German mathematician who invented the Möbius strip. Giraud had long been a science fiction enthusiast and Moebius now began turning out science fiction illustrations. Next came stories in comic book format, first for *Pilote* and then, from the mid-1970s onward, for *Metal Hurlant,* a magazine he helped found.

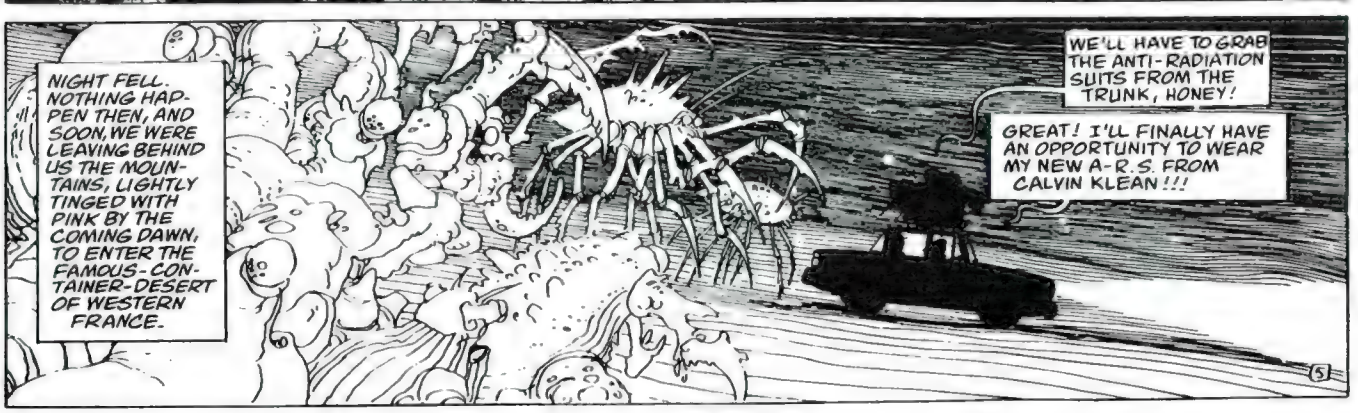
Moebius was a more thoughtful and patient artist than Gir. He favored a pen rather than a brush and was a master of every known pen technique. He did some handsome black-and-white jobs, and his color stories harken back to the children's book illustrations of such earlier masters as Arthur Rackham, Edmund Dulac, and the Robinson brothers. Moebius specialized in fantasy and science fiction and, unlike Gir, did his own scripting.

The Moebius style proved to be highly influential, inspiring such European artists as Bilal and Manera and, eventually, reaching across the sea to touch Americans such as Frank Miller.

When *Heavy Metal* came along later in the 1970s, readers in this country were able to read Giraud's *Metal Hurlant* work as well as look at the pictures. In the early 1980s there were a few American translations of some of the Blueberry titles. Finally in 1987 Marvel's Epic line, under editor Archie Goodwin, undertook to publish a series of trade paperback albums under the umbrella title of *Moebius—The Collected Fantasies of Jean Giraud.* At last Giraud's science fiction and fantasy work is available in this country, in English, in bulk rather than just in snippets.

Giraud has also worked on storyboards and costume design for several science fiction films. He settled in Southern California a few years ago. He has undergone some spiritual and philosophical changes and has told interviewers that he has turned away from drawing anything to do with sex and violence. It will be interesting to see what he does next. Meantime, there is all his past work to catch up on.

CLAUDINE, TELL THEM WHAT HAPPENED NEXT!
WHAT YOU'D EXPECT TO HAPPEN HAPPENS: WE SUCCUMB TO THEIR NUMBERS. THEY BIND US TIGHTLY AND CARRY US THROUGH A MAZE OF TUNNELS AND DARK CAVES, TO A HUGE CAVERN DEEP INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN. THIS IS THE LAIR OF THE PARTY POPPERS! WE BARELY HAVE TIME TO ADMIRE THEIR IMPRESSIVE DECOR BEFORE THEY THROW US INTO A DAMP CELL. WITH BARE ROCK WALLS, WEAKLY LIT BY A SPUTTERING TORCH. A MAN, ARMED TO THE TEETH, HIS FACE HIDDEN BEHIND HUGE DARK GLASSES, IS WATCHING US CLOSELY. SOON, WE HEAR THE ECHOING SOUND OF BARBARIC BLOOD-THIRSTY MELODIES, LIKE "LOVE ME TENDER" AND "IF I ONLY HAD A HEART," SUNG BY THOUSANDS OF VOICES. THEIR TEMPO IS QUITE FAST, ALMOST "SWING" IN SPITE OF THE 3/5 MEASURE. MY BLOOD FREEZES IN MY VEINS, FOR I RECOGNIZE THE SONGS WHICH TRADITIONALLY PRECEDE THE TOURIST SACRIFICES. IN THE DARK, I CATCH MY HUSBAND'S EYES. HE TOO KNOWS. WE ARE DOOMED! NO! A MIRACLE! WE ARE SAVED! THE GUARD TAKES OFF HIS GLASSES AND, TO OUR STUPEFACTION, WE RECOGNIZE ONE OF OUR EDITORS. HE TELLS US THAT, BY A SHEER COINCIDENCE, HE IS ON A PARTY POPPER TRAINING COURSE! SOON, HE UNTIES US AND LEADS US TO AN EMERGENCY EXIT. WE SPLIT RIGHT AWAY, BUT NOT WITHOUT FIRST TAKING A CAN OF GASOLINE THAT WAS LYING THERE. SOON AFTER, WE'RE BACK DRIVING INTO THE RAPIDLY APPROACHING NIGHT, WITH A WARM THOUGHT FOR THE MAN WHO RISKED ALL TO SAVE US! (1)
(1) I WANT TO REASSURE THE READER. NO MATTER HOW HE DID IT, THE MAN WHO RESCUED US MADE IT TO SAFETY, AND ALL OUR EDITORS ARE STILL ALIVE AND WELL.


NIGHT FELL. NOTHING HAPPEN THEN, AND SOON, WE WERE LEAVING BEHIND US THE MOUNTAINS, LIGHTLY TINGED WITH PINK BY THE COMING DAWN, TO ENTER THE FAMOUS-CONTAINER-DESERT OF WESTERN FRANCE.
WE'LL HAVE TO GRAB THE ANTI-RADIATION SUITS FROM THE TRUNK, HONEY!
GREAT! I'LL FINALLY HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO WEAR MY NEW A-R.S. FROM CALVIN KLEAN!!!
5

A fine example of Moebius' line drawings, along with a reassuring comment from the editor. Copyright © 1987 Starwatcher Graphics.

JERRY GRANDENETTI

For some, drawing comics is a lifetime calling; for others it's only a stop on the way to somewhere else. Grandenetti spent a good many years as a comic book artist but then switched to a new career. While in the field he did some memorable work on the *Spirit;* created an occult detective of his own; did Westerns, war stories, and science fiction; took a turn illustrating the *outré* adventures of the Spectre; and went on to draw some very individual horror stories for both color and black-and-white books.

He was born in Bronxville, New York, and studied at several schools in New York City, including the School of Visual Arts and Pratt Institute. Although Grandenetti had grown up with a strong interest in comic books and had devoted time as a youth to copying pages out of them, his main interest during his student days was architectural drawing. Even so, the yen to draw comics grew stronger, and he finally "collected some of my junk together" and made up a portfolio to take around to comic book houses. This was in 1946. His samples consisted mostly of his architectural drawings, plus a few copied comic book pages. When he showed them to Everett M. "Busy" Arnold, the publisher of such titles as *Police Comics, Smash Comics,* and *Blackhawk,* he was told that Will Eisner was looking for help on his weekly *Spirit* section. Grandenetti hurried down to Eisner's offices on Wall Street and was hired on the spot. "I've been lucky all my life," he once said.

Another talented artist, John Spranger, was already on staff. As Grandenetti recalls, Spranger did a good deal of the penciling, Eisner handled the inking, and the newcomer drew backgrounds. "I would compose the scene," Eisner has said, "and Grandenetti, with his good architectural background, would fill it in. . . . He ultimately became a very competent comic book artist in his own right." Grandenetti's embellishments started showing up in the Sunday sections in spring 1947. Soon after he arrived, Jules Feiffer joined the group as an assistant/writer.

Grandenetti worked on *The Spirit,* off and on, until the weekly section ceased to be in October 1952. He had assimilated much of the Eisner style, worked out a variation of his own, and during his tenure gradually came to do more and more of the drawing. Some 1948 adaptations of classic horror tales, such as *The Fall of the House of Usher,* are mostly his work. In the waning weeks of the feature Grandenetti was allowed to try out a new style of his own. He was trying for a slicker, more realistic approach, more open and less shadowy.

Before he abandoned his Eisner-based approach, however, he drew *The Secret Files of Dr. Drew.* Done in the Eisner shop, it appeared in Fiction House's *Rangers Comics.* The doctor was a ghostbuster who tangled with werewolves, vampires, ghost pirates, and related problems. The stories were laid out somewhat in the Eisner manner—shadows were thick and the occult investigator's suits were as wrinkled and baggy as the Spirit's—but what marked the feature as Grandenetti's were the architectural touches. Buildings abounded—ancient castles, cursed little European villages, movie studios, underwater cities. And he devoted as much attention to interiors—to stairways, ceiling beams, and so on—as Orson Welles did in *Citizen Kane.* Grandenetti got to sign this feature, making it his first comic book credit.

During the 1950s he worked for a variety of comic publishers. He drew *Crimebuster* for *Boy Comics* and did cowboy and war stuff for DC. In collaboration with writer Ed Herron, he did samples of an adventure strip titled *Rip Tide.* The strip was on the verge of being sold to a newspaper syndicate, but then the deal fell through. Looking back from the 1980s, Grandenetti feels that if *Rip Tide* had gotten going he might still be in comics today. It didn't, though, and he began pursuing art jobs outside comics, especially in advertising.

In the 1960s, he continued doing a variety of comic book work, but he wasn't any too excited about any of them. He drew the Spectre for a while, one of the few superheroes to be found on his list of credits. The early 1970s found him back with the occult and contributing some very distinctive stories to DC's *Ghosts, The Unexpected,* and others. He'd moved away from realism again, using a bold inking style and odd angle shots and layouts that often caused the action to break through the panels and sprawl across the page. Grandenetti says he was making another attempt to keep expanding, to keep himself feeling some excitement about his work. It's always been important for him to "change horses in midstream." He collaborated with veteran Joe Simon on *Prez* and *The Green Team* for DC in the mid-1970s, but neither was a hit. Grandenetti left the comic book field soon after.

For the past dozen years he's worked as an art director for one of the largest Manhattan-based advertising agencies. He finds the work exciting and challenging. He has no intention of ever going back to comics.

FAR FROM THE HEART OF THE BUSY CITY, ATOP DISMAL BONE HILL, DR. DREW CARRIES ON HIS CEASELESS RESEARCH IN THE DARK REGIONS OF THE UNKNOWN....

IT IS A LONG, WEARY CLIMB TO HIS GLOOMY MANSION... AND THOSE WHO COME THERE TO SEEK HIS AID ARE PROMPTED BY A STRONGER MOTIVE THAN CURIOSITY...

IN THE CASE OF THE SLIM GIRL WHO MADE THE CLIMB LATE ONE OCTOBER AFERNOON, THAT MOTIVE WAS FEAR!

Grandenetti was still under the Eisner spell when he drew Dr. Drew. Copyright © 1948 Fiction House, Inc.

MIKE GRELL

One of Mike Grell's specialties of late has been resurrecting and refurbishing venerable characters who are no longer exactly stars. He did it for Tarzan in the Sunday funnies in the early 1980s and most recently he's revitalized the oldtime comic book archer Green Arrow.

Born in Wisconsin in 1947, Michael John Grell attended the University of Wisconsin and the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. He also took the Famous Artists School course through the mail. During the late 1960s Grell was in the air force, spending part of his time in Vietnam.

While he lists his major artistic influences as Hal Foster, Al Williamson, John Prentice, and Neal Adams, one of his first professional jobs after the service was assisting Dale Messick on her feminine and frilly newspaper strip *Brenda Starr.* He broke into comic books in 1973 with DC. There he drew such established characters as Aquaman, Superboy, Green Lantern, Batman, and Green Arrow.

Swords and sorcery fever hit comics in the early 1970s. Marvel was stricken first, producing Conan, Kull, and Red Sonja. DC eventually followed suit with *Sword of Sorcery, Claw, Stalker,* and a version of the earliest hero in Western culture, Beowulf. Then came Grell's *Warlord,* a mixture of fantasy and his own air force experiences. *The Comic Book Heroes* says of the book, "Grell's vision was clear and strong, and *Warlord* proved to be not only a fresh and daring series, but one of the very few creations of the mid-1970s to last." It describes Grell himself as "one of the first of a new breed of creators who, functioning at once as originators, writers, and artists, would guide their comics according to their own personal visions." Actually, of course, this new breed harks back to the earlier days of comic books—before features were turned out on production lines—when such people as Jack Cole, Will Eisner, and Bill Everett took care of creating, writing, and drawing their characters.

Among the other DC features Grell was involved with in the 1970s was *The Legion of Super-Heroes.* His work on that feature has been called "wholly contemporary, echoing Neal Adams in its flamboyant action and photorealistic faces." He also put in stints with the *Phantom Stranger* and the *Black Orchid.*

In 1981 Grell returned to the funny papers, taking over the Sunday *Tarzan* page. Over the years several other comic book artists had taken turns with the newspaper version of the jungle lord's adventures, among them Dan Barry, Bob Lubbers, John Celardo, and Gil Kane. "No action adventure has been loved by as many fans for as many years as *Tarzan,"* Grell said soon after moving into the jungle, "so working on his strip means a lot to me." He also said he was "having fun," which is evident from the pages. Grell was putting in a good deal of work and thought. Grell also mentioned at the time an admiration for the work of Roy Crane and said he was striving for the "simplified but authentic look" of Crane's *Buz Sawyer.*

By 1983 Grell was back in the comic book business. This time, though, he was working not for DC but for the independent First Comics. For them he created *Jon Sable, Freelance*—borrowing his own middle name for his vigilante-for-hire's first name. Sable is a hardboiled, frequently violent, world-roving character, described by *Amazing Heroes* as being "rather like a combination of Dirty Harry, the Lone Ranger, and James Bond." The magazine has also said that "Grell is one of the few creators who writes as well as he draws. For this reason, he is able to portray three-dimensional characters as well as a vivid, piercing street epic."

Sable was successful for First, and Grell soon took his hero to Vietnam. He's said, "I worked through a few months of flashbacks and nightmares during the writing of those issues. . . . But it gave me a clearer perspective on all sides. I was able to write a more effective story for that reason." A couple of years ago he gave up the drawing of Jon Sable's adventures and recently relinquished the scripting as well. His character, under the name of just plain *Sable,* found his way to television for a short stint in 1987. Grell's comment: "Dealing with TV or movie people isn't like dealing with the real world."

Grell returned to DC in 1987 and his major achievement of the year was a three-issue miniseries devoted to his old acquaintance Green Arrow. The trio of graphic novels was imaginatively done and earned Grell considerable praise. He told an interviewer, "They're saying it's the best thing they've seen me do."

MYKE, I'M JUST NOT SURE ANYMORE.
I GUESS I'M SUDDENLY FEELING A LITTLE GUNSHY.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WANT YOU, I DON'T KNOW IF I'M READY.
YOU KNOW THE KIND OF LIFE I LEAD.
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN CHANGE- RIGHT NOW, I DON'T WANT TO CHANGE.
ARE YOU AFRAID, JON MOSES?
YES.
OF ME?
WHY?
BECAUSE, IF I LET MYSELF... I COULD LOVE YOU.
13

Mike Grell's artwork is worth far more than a thousand words in this issue of *Jon Sable Freelance*. Copyright © 1985 First Comics, Inc.

MILT GROSS

Actually, Gross was a great comic strip artist who spent his last years contributing his certifiably zany type of material to comic books. His appearances were relatively limited, but he managed to pop up in some highly unlikely places; and he is one of the very few cartoonists, other than Walt Disney, who ever had his name in the title of a comic book.

Milt Gross Funnies appeared on the newsstands in 1947, toward the end of Gross's career. By that time he had been a professional cartoonist for over three decades. In his relatively short life he created a half-dozen nationally syndicated strips, wrote and illustrated several best-selling books, produced a humorous graphic novel, worked in Hollywood with such people as Charlie Chaplin, turned out artwork that appeared in a Bing Crosby–Betty Hutton movie, and once got a fan letter from Calvin Coolidge.

Born in the Bronx in 1895, Gross dropped out of high school—where he had been a classmate of future gangster Dutch Schultz—to take a job as the art department office boy at Hearst's New York *Evening Journal.* While still in his teens he began to sell strips, one to a small syndicate and several to the *Journal* and its sister papers. In the early 1920s he jumped over to the New York *World.* In addition to drawing such strips as *Banana Oil,* he wrote and illustrated his own column for the Sunday edition. It was there he began fooling around with Jewish dialect. He recounted the adventures of the Feitlebaum family, retold fairy tales and famous poems, and even put great moments in history into dialect. The stuff caught on, and in 1926, Doran issued a collection of the columns under the title *Nize Baby.* The 1920s was most certainly Milt Gross's decade—the years when all sorts of people became fascinated with the American language and its colorful ethnic variations.

While not an accomplished draftsman, Gross possessed a style that was entirely his own and free of swipes. His characters resembled those of no other artist. It's possible he may have been traumatized early in life by silent movie comedian Ben Turpin, since an unusually high percentage of his characters are crosseyed. Sausage noses were another of his trademarks, so it was probably inevitable that he'd eventually do a strip about a delicatessen. Not only the people but the furniture, buildings, autos, and trees were all distinctly his.

He drew a *Nize Baby* Sunday page for a while, then switched to *Count Screwloose.* Each and every week the diminutive and crosseyed Count escaped from the Nuttycrest Asylum to try his luck in the outside world. Each and every week he encountered such lunacy and hypocrisy that he decided to climb back over the wall into the relative sanity of Nuttycrest.

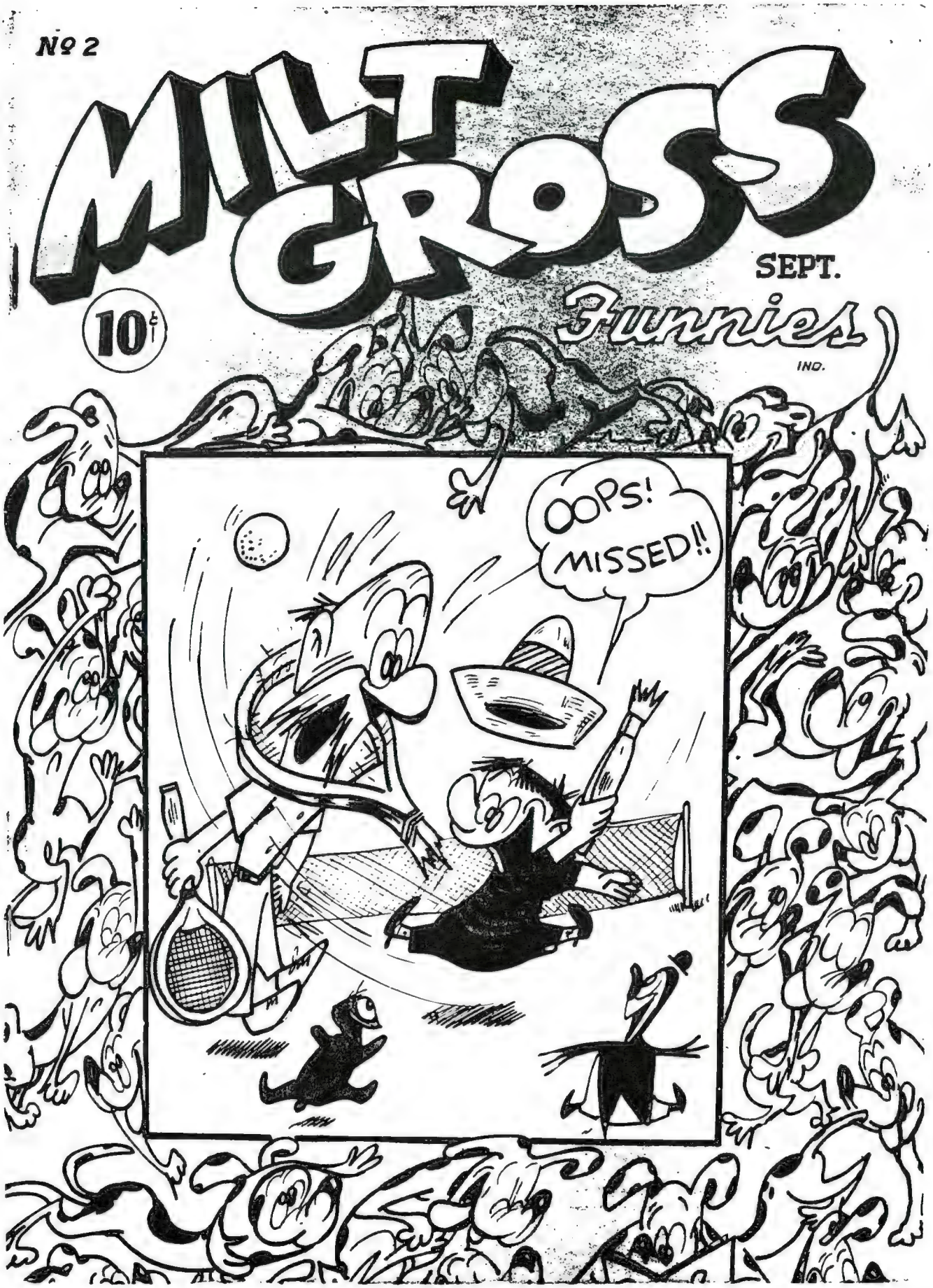
Gross switched to King Features in 1930 and drew several strips and pages. In 1931 he introduced *Dave's Delicatessen.* Dave was a likable bumbler, a softie who tried to act tough but always ended up giving hungry people free food, getting taken by con men, and generally making a fool of himself in front of friends, wife, and community. After a while Gross introduced continuity, usually parodies of the adventure stuff of the period. Dave trekked in Africa, joined the Foreign Legion, tangled with crooks. Eventually the daily strip folded and Count Screwloose took over the Sunday. As the 1930s progressed Gross came up with several new features, including a daily catchall titled *Grossly Exaggerated* and a new Sunday, devoted to *That's My Pop!*

A major achievement of Gross's career was *He Done Her Wrong.* A fat hardcover novel, it contains no dialogue or captions but tells its story—a parody of stage melodramas and silent movies—entirely in cartoons. "And not a word in it," proclaims Gross on the title page, "no music, too." He starts off the brief foreword with the line, "They laughed when I sat down to draw a novel." The book, while it also kids the more serious attempts at graphic novels by the likes of somber artist Lynn Ward, is unlike anything seen before or since. The hero wears a coonskin cap and is, of course, crosseyed.

In the early 1940s Gross, who was suffering from a heart condition, was living in the Hollywood area. He did artwork for such movies as *Here Come the Waves* and *Roxie Hart* and wrote a weekly newspaper column. His work, though, was gone from the funny papers. Then in 1946 a rather unusual comic book was launched. Titled *Picture News,* it was a nonfiction magazine that presented current news stories in comics form. Gross contributed four pages of nonserious comments in his distinctive drawing style for each issue. Jack Lehti, who was art director at the comic, recalls that Gross was in the hospital during part of that time. Editiorial conferences were held by long-distance phone, with Lehti in Manhattan and Gross in his Los Angeles hospital room.

Milt Gross Funnies hit the stands in summer 1947, a fifty-two-page magazine written, drawn, and apparently published by Gross. The first issue showcased *That's My Pop!,* Gross's saga of a likable but ne'er-do-well father and his family. The drawing is up to Gross's 1920s best, and the layouts are completely unorthodox. The second issue, which proved to be the last, included a variety of Gross's old characters, including Pete the Pooch and Count Screwloose. Gross next showed up in *Giggle Comics* and in *Hi-Jinx,* just about the only comic book of the era devoted to teenage animals.

He died in 1953 at the age of fifty-eight.



The incomparable Gross drew this cover for his short-lived magazine. Copyright © 1947 Gross Publications, Inc.

CHAD GROTHKOPF

Once upon a time in comic books there were cartoonists who could make a living by drawing things other than superheroes. There were even those who could subsist chiefly by drawing funny animals. Chad Grothkopf—who always signed himself just plain Chad—was one of them, and in the early and mid-1940s he produced some of the best and funniest funny animals this side of the Disney comic books.

Before he ever drew a comic book page, Chad worked as an animator, and in fact, he's credited with producing the first original animated cartoon for television. He was born in Chicago in 1914 and, by the mid-1930s, was in Hollywood, working as an art director at Paramount Pictures. He also put in some time at the Walt Disney studio before moving to New York City in 1938 to work at NBC's television station. At that time there were approximately fifty TV sets in the whole Manhattan area. As Chad recalls the entire staff consisted of four people, himself included. Their broadcast schedule was a bit irregular, and instead of listing it in the newspaper, "We would call up and tell people we were going on the air." They'd stay on until they ran out of film. Chad drew animated cartoons about Willie the Worm, which were the first ever done especially for television. Chad believes he also produced the very first TV commercial in the history of the medium, a spot for Esso gas.

Pioneers, unfortunately, don't always make big money and so Chad started looking for ways to increase his income. Comic books were burgeoning in the late 1930s, doing a lot better than television. Oddly enough, he made his comic book debut drawing straight adventure stuff. "I had to," he explains. "There wasn't any animated cartoon-type of thing then." Nothing much in the way of original material, anyway.

He first went to work for DC, where he was paid $7 a page to write, draw, and letter. Chad drew *Radio Squad* and *Federal Men*—both with scripts by Jerry Siegel—as well as *Three Aces* in *Action Comics, Sandman* in *Adventure Comics,* and *Johnny Quick* in *More Fun.* He seemed not quite at home with these serious adventure features. A much better-looking feature was *Cliff Crosby* in *Detective Comics,* which was eventually penciled by Alex Kotzky and inked by Chad. His finest hour was yet to come.

By 1942 Chad had also done some work for Marvel, including illuminating the adventures of Stan Lee's Nazi-basher, the Destroyer. That same year, he says, Fawcett Publications, knowing of Chad's lighter side, "called me in and said, 'Can you make a book for us?' " Up to then the Fawcett comic books had relied chiefly on superheroes—Captain Marvel, Spy Smasher, Bulletman, and others. They now wanted a new title aimed at a younger audience, at the same kids who were buying up the comics adapting the Disney and Warner Bros. cartoon characters. Chad got together with Fawcett editorial director Ralph Daigh and they came up with a magazine that was eventually christened with the direct—and generic—name of *Funny Animals.*

Fawcett's biggest hit to date had been Captain Marvel, who had debuted in 1940; followed by Captain Marvel, Jr., in 1941 and Mary Marvel in 1942. At the same time that Mary made her first appearance, Chad introduced Hoppy the Marvel Bunny in *Funny Animals.* Hoppy was a rabbit gentleman who was transformed into a super-rabbit in a bunny-sized Captain Marvel outfit by uttering the magic word *Shazam!* The captain himself appeared on the cover of the premiere issue, along with Chad's characters—Hoppy, Sherlock the Monk, Billy the Kid, and that erstwhile TV star Willie the Worm.

Chad worked in an assured, animated cartoon style, mixing the cute with the wacky. His animals were strongly drawn and boldly inked, and his backgrounds were rich with the sort of gingerbread architecture found in the better fairytale illustrations. Since he was responsible for turning out a sixty-four-page magazine each month, he set up a shop to produce *Funny Animals.* It was located on Twentieth Street in New York City, across the street from the studio of swing drummer Gene Krupa, and had a staff of about a half-dozen, including Kotzky and a sometime animator named Don Gunn.

Chad also drew for the *Parents'* magazine line of comics, doing both straight and funny stuff, a job that led to his doing a newspaper Sunday page that they packaged. It was called *Famous Fiction,* and Chad did some very attractive adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland, Ali Baba,* and other children's classics. After serving in the army during World War II, he returned to *Funny Animals.*

He next moved back into television and was associated with *The Howdy-Doody Show,* one of the earliest hit kid programs. He did much of the merchandising art and from 1950 to 1953 drew a *Howdy-Doody* Sunday page. For a while he was affiliated with the Famous Artists School, and the Cartoon Course chapter on television art is by him.

He is still active today and lives in Connecticut. But he's just as likely to be found in an animation studio in Hollywood or in Europe.

HAS THE MAD SCULPTOR STRUCK SO SOON? WHERE ARE WILLIE AND SAMMY?
I'LL SEARCH FOR THEM, BILLY. YOU TAKE CARE OF MILLIE AND THE OTHERS.
SURE THING, PARD.
GEE, I'M SORRY I SAID YOU WERE A FRAIDY-CAT, HOPPY. YOU ARE BRAVE AS MARVEL BUNNY!
GOOM!
UNKNOWN TO THE OTHERS, LITTLE HOPPY IS REALLY CAPT. MARVEL BUNNY. HE SAYS HIS MAGIC WORD... "SHAZAM"...
THEY CAN'T SEE ME NOW, SO I'LL CHANGE INTO CAPTAIN MARVEL BUNNY!
SHAZAM!
...WHICH IMMEDIATELY CHANGES HIM INTO THE FEARLESS, FLYING, MIGHTIEST BUNNY IN THE WORLD!
I'LL SEARCH EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY IN THIS NECK OF THE WOODS!
A FEW MINUTES LATER...
I'VE LOOKED EVERYWHERE FOR SAMMY AND WILLIE! THEY SEEM TO HAVE VANISHED.. ..THAT'S MILLIE'S VOICE!
HELP!
EVERYBODY'S DISAPPEARED!
WHAT EVIL DWELLS IN THIS FOREST? WILL CAPTAIN MARVEL BUNNY BE ABLE TO FIGHT THIS UNSEEN DANGER?
I MUST FIND MY FRIENDS! MAYBE WHOEVER LIVES HERE HAS SEEN THEM. I'M TOO BIG TO FIT THROUGH THAT DOOR, SO I'LL CHANGE BACK TO HOPPY!
SHAZAM!
HEH-HEH-HEH!
ONCE AGAIN THE MAGIC WORD IS SPOKEN. THIS TIME IT CHANGES THE MARVEL BUNNY BACK TO HOPPY!
GOSH IT'S DARK IN THERE!
HEH, HEH, HEH!

Chad's contribution to the Marvel Family saga. Copyright © 1944 Fawcett Publications, Inc.

IRWIN HASEN

Before he ever began his long association with *Dondi,* a newspaper strip whose wide-eyed sentimentality failed to win the hearts and minds of more cynical fans, Hasen was a comic book artist—and a comic book artist who did innovative and appealing work. He started his career in the first years of the Golden Age, was the chief artist on the original Green Lantern, and drew an impressive string of other, lesser costumed heroes.

Born in New York City, in 1918, Hasen attended both the National Academy and the Art Students League. He's listed his major influences as Gustave Doré, Heinrich Kley, and sports cartoonist Willard Mullin. He moved from doing sports cartooning himself into comic books in the late 1930s, and some of his earliest pages were sports fillers. He was affiliated with three different shops, including that of Harry "A" Chesler, and thereby got the opportunity to do backup features for a variety of early titles. By working for Lloyd Jacquet's Funnies, Inc., he got to draw a feature about a lean, mustachioed detective known as the Ferret for a few issues of *Marvel Mystery Comics.* Hasen was more prolific while employed by Bert Whitman's shop, where his fellow workers included Jack Kirby, George Storm, and a fellow who signed himself Pagsilang Rey Isip.

While with Whitman, Hasen drew *Secret Agent Z-2, Bob Preston, Explorer,* and *Cat Man,* the superhero with nine lives, for the shortlived *Crash Comics,* as well as *Citizen Smith,* about a sort of plainclothes superpatriot, for the even shorter-lived *Captain Fearless.* His work grew more assured and he was starting to pay more attention to layout and staging. The Green Hornet, the crimefighting radio hero who inspired such comic book heroes as the Crimson Avenger and the Sandman, was licensed for funny books by Bert Whitman in 1940. Hasen worked on the *Green Hornet* comic book's initial issues. Whitman sold his rights to the Harvey Brothers fairly early on, later claiming he made more money that way than he would've by continuing the comic.

Hasen's first costumed crimebuster, the Fox, was done for MLJ's *Blue Ribbon Comics.* Though the Fox did wear a costume, he didn't have a superpower to his name. In everyday life he was Paul Patton, "former all-around athlete at Penn State," who was now working as a newspaper photographer. Hasen drew the Fox in a loose, shadowy style, and he was already thinking in terms of the comic book page, exploring layout possibilities that some of his stodgier contemporaries overlooked. His only problem was the Fox's jet-black costume. It took the realistic Hasen a couple of issues to realize that a superhero's costume is a fantasy thing that doesn't have wrinkles or baggy knees.

In 1940 he drew a few episodes of *Larry Steele,* a tough private eye, for *Detective Comics.* The following year he started working for DC's All-American division and editor/cartoonist Sheldon Mayer—an association that would last for over a dozen years. He was assigned the *Green Lantern* less than a year after it had started in *All-American Comics.* The superhero with the magic lamp had been created by writer Bill Finger and artist Mart Nodell, and for a while they got the only credits. Hasen ghosted several stories before his name ever appeared.

Hasen did some of his best work on the *Green Lantern,* but never quite became a star artist of the Golden Age. He was, however, admired by many of his peers. While still a teenager, Alex Toth got his first interview with Mayer because of a fan letter he wrote about Hasen. "Shelly admitted he'd taken all that time with me," Toth has said, "because not too many others shared his appreciation of, and admiration for, Irwin Hasen's originality, style, simplicity, snap, and storytelling potential."

For *Sensation* Hasen drew another Bill Finger creation, *Wildcat,* which dealt with a heavyweight boxer who donned an animal skin to fight crooks and criminals. Hasen also produced a comedy feature about a diminutive plainclothes New York cop named O'Malley.

After a stretch in the army, Hasen did a newspaper comic strip based on the radio show "The Goldbergs." However, unlike Gertrude Berg's highly popular show, the strip was not a hit, and in the immediate postwar years Hasen returned to DC. He worked again on Green Lantern, added Sargon the Sorcerer to his list of clients, and had a hand in several issues of *All-Star Comics.*

Success struck in 1955 when he teamed up with Gus Edson on a strip about a war orphan with as much pluck and bad luck as Little Orphan Annie. The Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate, which also syndicated *Annie,* apparently couldn't get enough of put-upon waifs and signed up this one, too. At its peak *Dondi* ran in over a hundred newspapers. Hasen stuck with it until it folded a few years ago.

...MEANWHILE, THE ENEMY PLANE CARRIES CITIZEN SMITH FAR INLAND...
THEY'RE GOING TO LAND! I'D BETTER GET INSIDE THE PLANE!
THOUGHT I WAS LEFT IN THE OCEAN, EH?
IT'S DOT SNOOPING AMERICAN! GET HIM!
ONE DOWN— THREE TO GO!
OKAY, BRINKER, LAND THIS PLANE... AND NO FUNNY BUSINESS!
ACH! YOU!! YOU!
THE WAITING NAZI'S DASH TOWARD THE PLANE.....
TELL THEM I'M A FRIEND OR I'LL BREAK YOUR ARM!
BUT WHO IS THIS FELLOW, HERR BRINKER?
ER,—HE'S WORKING WITH US!
YOUR PLAN WORKED, HERR BRINKER! WE BROUGHT THESE BIG TANKS OVER HERE AT NIGHT IN HUGE SILENT-MOTORED PLANES.....
...WHILE THE AMERICAN FORCES ARE "PLAYING" WITH OUR CARRIERS AT SEA WE WILL ATTACK KEY CITIES WITH OUR TANKS AND DISRUPT THE NATION... AND CONQUER!
YOU WILL, EH?
5

Vintage Irwin Hasen from the war years.

RUSS HEATH

Heath is a dedicated realist, a man who has spent over four decades in comics and has rarely drawn a superhero. Combat—past, present, and future—is his specialty. Whether it's a bloody skirmish on a World War II battlefield, a violent confrontation in the arena in ancient Rome, or a rip-roaring gunfight on a street in the Old West, Heath can draw it, set it up dramatically, and get every detail right. More than one admirer of his work has declared that Heath can stage this sort of thing even better than the movies.

He was born in 1926 and grew up in New Jersey. "I was an only child; we lived in a neighborhood where there weren't too many kids to play with," he's recalled. "I had a little imagination, so I was drawing all the time." His father had worked as a cowboy in Arizona at one time. "Dad had a lot of great Western tales, and when he was there about 1915, there were a lot of men still alive who had been witnesses to, and participants in, many of the spectacular events out there," Heath has said. "He paid close attention to my drawings and would correct me often when I put the wrong kind of clothing on one of my cowboys." Heath was also a great fan of the newspaper comics of the 1930s, especially *Terry and the Pirates* and *Tarzan.* His only formal art training was by way of a teacher whom his father hired to "come and tutor me in art on Saturday mornings."

Heath was still in high school when he broke into comics, during World War II. While on summer vacation, he drew *Hammerhead Hawley,* which dealt with a nautical chap who created a shark-finned sub to fight the Japanese in the Pacific, for *Captain Aero Comics.* After graduating he got a job with an advertising agency art department, where he later described his duties as consisting chiefly of sharpening pencils. After a spell of hunting for freelance work during his lunch hours, Heath was hired by Stan Lee at Marvel. His father's early counseling had served him well, and over the next decade he worked on such books as *Kid Colt Outlaw, Two-Gun Kid,* and *The Arizona Kid.* Heath also got to draw for jungle, science fiction, humor, horror, and war comics. *The World Encyclopedia of Comics* believes that "his best work was on the Westerns. . . . His material for *Arizona Kid* and *Kid Colt Outlaw* stands as some of the finest Western work ever done in comic books." Archie Goodwin, longtime comics writer and editor, has described Heath's art of those years as not as polished his later work, but "still powerful, anchoring the characters solidly in time and place. . . . While other artists of the period seemed mired in the fancy-dress look of Hollywood's singing cowboys, his Western were filled with convincing grit and realism."

In the early 1950s Heath began drawing for EC, working on both *Frontline Combat* and *Mad.* This job started a long association with Harvey Kurtzman: "I guess I worked on everything that Harvey was involved in at the time—*Mad* magazine, *Humbug, Trump,* and *Little Annie Fanny* for *Playboy.*" From 1950 on he was associated as well with DC. The *Brave and Bold* title was a particular showcase for him; and he produced *Robin Hood, Golden Gladiator,* and *Silent Knight* for its pages. He drew the *Sea Devils* book in the early 1960s and later took over *Sgt. Rock* in *Our Army at War.* "To say Joe Kubert is a rough act to follow goes beyond understatement," Goodwin observed in 1973. "Yet Russ has done it and in the process blossomed from an excellent artist into an *incredible* one. . . . Working from scale models, he's brought new meaning to the word *realism,* maybe even gone beyond it, bringing a sort of superclarity to combat scenes no film or camera could hope to catch."

Summing up his career in 1981, Heath said, "I did all kinds of jobs over the years—worked for George Wunder on *Terry and the Pirates* for a short while, and I guess I was cartoonist 1001 to work with Dan Barry on the *Flash Gordon* strip. I did a ton of comic magazines for Marvel and then another ton for DC. Along the way there were some movie posters, too." In 1981 he even undertook drawing the revived *Lone Ranger* newspaper strip, daily and Sunday. It was a handsome effort, and Heath obviously enjoyed this fresh opportunity to draw Western adventure. But since the strip was tied in the with monumentally unsuccessful *Lone Ranger* movie, it was unable to sustain a long, full life on its own.

Heath got his first screen credit doing backgrounds for Ralph Bakshi's animated feature *American Pop.* A few years ago he relocated in Southern California, and the majority of his work since has been for Saturday morning animation.

GOLDEN GLADIATOR

THE BULL WILL CRUSH HIM AGAINST THE WALL!
BY JUPITER'S THUNDERBOLTS! I COULD ASK FOR NOTHING BETTER!
NO, MARCUS-- NO-- DON'T FALL!
NOTHING CAN PREVENT IT!
BUT SINEWY MUSCLES STRAIN--UNTIL, FINALLY...
BEHOLD! A WONDER! MARCUS CONQUERED THE BEAST!
HE'S NOT PAST DEATH YET!
THEN, TRUMPETS BLARE...
HEAR YE! THE WINNING GLADIATORS SHALL COMPETE IN THE CHARIOT RACES! AND IT IS BY THE PRAETOR'S EDICT THAT THE WINNER SHALL BE FREED, AND WIN THE GOLDEN GLADIATOR AWARD!
IF MARCUS WINS, UNCLE, HE WILL BE A FREE MAN!
THE SHEEPHERDER'S LUCK CAN'T LAST! I HAVE PAID COTTA, PEER OF THE CHARIOTEERS--TO SEE THAT IT DOESN'T!

In the arena with Russ Heath. Copyright © 1971 National Periodical Publications, Inc.

GRAHAM INGELS

Ingels does not look back with much fondness on the 1950s, when he was one of the foremost producers of comic book horror stories. When a fanzine attempted to interview him a few years ago, he stated, "I'm not a total recluse but I avoid public contact as much as possible, particularly relating to the past." Yet no less a horror expert than Stephen King is an admirer of his. In one of King's short stories Ingels is described as someone "who could draw every god-awful thing in the world—and some out of it." And in *Danse Macabre,* his study of horror entertainments, King states, "I cut my teeth" on the EC comics wherein Ingels worked under the penname Ghastly. "The horror comics of the fifties," says King, "still sum up for me the epitome of horror, that emotion of fear that underlies terror, an emotion which is slightly less fine, because it is not entirely of the mind. Horror also invites a physical reaction by showing something which is physically wrong." Ingels was certainly a master of depicting the physically wrong, and he's earned a permanent place in the history of the horror genre—something he probably doesn't want.

Born in 1915, Ingels was in his mid-thirties when he began working for William Gaines's EC line. He was by that time a veteran of several years as a comic book artist and pulp magazine illustrator. From his teens on he had worked in various areas of commercial art; and in the early 1940s he signed on with Fiction House, which published both pulp magazines (including *Planet Stories, Wings,* and *Jungle Stories*) and comic books (among them, *Planet Comics, Wings Comics,* and *Jungle Comics*). According to a well-researched article by Bhob Stewart that appeared in *Fanfare,* "The sum total of Ingels's pulp art was published only by Fiction House between 1943 and 1945." Stewart says, "These illustrations show the beginnings of the gnarled, atmospheric style he developed to full effect during the fifties in his Old Witch EC tales—a style making generous use of silhouettes and twisted shadow shapes, perfect for illustrating horror stories."

For the comics side of Fiction House, Ingels drew such features as *Commando Ranger* in *Rangers Comics; Clipper Kirk* in *Wings Comics;* and *The Lost World* and *Auro, Lord of Jupiter* for *Planet Comics.* In 1947 he joined Ned Pines's publishing company, working both as an editor and as an artist for such titles as *Startling Comics* and *Thrilling Comics.* Artist Rafael Astarita worked with him during that time and has said, "I remember Graham Ingels as an intelligent man of unfailing good humor. He was funny, quick thinking, and intuitive." Much of their work was "to try to salvage a huge pile of drawings done during World War II and no longer acceptable. . . . The stuff we worked on was so badly drawn we couldn't correct the heads, so we drew new heads on strips of paper, cut them out, and cemented them in place."

Ingels graduated to EC in 1948, before Gaines had introduced any of the titles that would make EC famous—and would inspire enthusiastic criticism and governmental inquiries. Ingels, therefore, initially drew adventure, crime, and love stories for *Gunfighter, Saddle Justice,* and *Modern Love.* When the EC horror titles—*The Haunt of Fear, Tales from the Crypt,* and *The Vault of Horror*—were launched in 1950, Gaines didn't think Ingels was suited for them. However, he and editor Al Feldstein tried out Ingels and, "It didn't take us long to realize what had happened . . . that Ingels was Mr. Horror himself." Feldstein feels that the atmosphere at EC in the early 1950s allowed Ingels to work at his peak. "When he came to EC, we didn't set up . . . limitations," he's explained. "We encouraged him to develop his own screwball, hairy, black-and-white style. That's why he developed the way he did. And that's why his work stands out."

By the mid-1950s, increasing and well-organized criticism of the excesses of crime and horror comics succeeded in closing down the EC line. Ingels's career in comics didn't last much beyond that. "When the horror stuff went out, Graham went out with it," said the late Howard Nostrand, friend and fellow artist. "He heard about an opening up at Famous Artists, so he went up. He was working there for a while, correcting papers. . . . I guess it finally got to be too much, and he just took off and left." For several years none of Ingels's colleagues knew what had become of him. At a 1972 comics convention in New York City, Gaines was asked about Ingels's whereabouts. "Graham Ingels kind of dropped out of things and disappeared about ten years ago," he replied. "We didn't even know if he was alive until fairly recently, and we discovered to our delight . . . that Graham was in Florida. He doesn't want it known where he is in Florida, and *I* don't know where he is in Florida. . . . The way I get in touch with him is, I call an attorney in Florida and the attorney calls Graham and Graham calls me collect."

Ingels has remained in Florida, quietly working in commercial art and not at all nostalgic about his Ghastly past.

OLD JASPER WENT TO THE WINDOW. HE POINTED OUT INTO THE HOWLING NIGHT...
MY FATHER WAS GARDENER HERE BEFORE ME. HE NEVER HAD ANY MONEY. NEVER COULD SAVE ANY. WHEN MY MOTHER DIED, SHE WAS BURIED OUT THERE...
FAR ACROSS THE FAIRCHILD ESTATE, THE WIND TOSSED LEAVES AGAINST A STATELY MARBLE EDIFICE ...THE FAIRCHILD FAMILY CRYPT... THEN SPUN AROUND, AND SKIPPED OVER THE SHABBY GRAVES IN THE SIMPLE LITTLE CEMETERY BESIDE IT...
...OUT THERE...IN YOUR PRIVATE POTTER'S FIELD... YOUR SERVANTS' CEMETERY.
OLD JASPER'S VOICE WAS SAD...LIKE A CHILD WHO'D CRIED TOO LOUD AND TOO LONG...
I REMEMBER HOW THEY CAME TO THIS COTTAGE AND LIFTED HER FROM THE BED AND DUMPED HER INTO A PINE BOX AND HAULED IT OUT THERE AND DROPPED IT INTO THE YAWNING HOLE AND FILLED IT UP AND IT WAS ALL OVER. SIMPLE. QUICK. NOTHING.
'AND I REMEMBER HOW I STOOD THERE, AND WATCHED THEM SHOVEL THE SOFT EARTH UPON MY MOTHER'S COFFIN AND HOW I SWORE THAT I WOULD NEVER LET IT HAPPEN TO MY FATHER WHEN HIS TIME CAME...'
'I WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD THEN. I STARTED TO SAVE. WHEN I WAS EIGHTEEN, I'D RUN ENOUGH ERRANDS AND DID ENOUGH ODD JOBS TO AMASS THE 'HUGE' SUM OF ONE HUNDRED AND SIX DOLLARS. AND THIS MY FATHER FOUND ONE NIGHT...'
'AND WENT OUT AND GOT DRUNK AND WAS ROBBED AND MURDERED...'
'AND SO HE, TOO, WAS PUT IN A PLAIN PINE BOX, AND DROPPED IN A HOLE OUT THERE, AND COVERED UP, WITH NO POMP... NO CARE. ONLY THE SOBBING OF AN EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD SON...'

Graham Ingels' vivid characterizations bring this old man to life. Copyright © 1988 William M. Gaines.

AL JAFFEE

Al Jaffee has been silly and irreverent in print for nearly a half-century. He broke into comics during the first heyday of superheroes with a mock heroic epic titled *Inferior Man.* He followed that with such creations as *Ziggy Pig and Silly Seal* and went on to become one of *Mad*'s most renowned contributors. A few years ago, when asked by the National Cartoonists Society what his ambition in life was, Jaffee replied, "To become a vital force reshaping the social, intellectual, and political destiny of mankind with a view toward bringing peace, prosperity, and a higher degree of understanding between people regardless of race, color, or creed throughout the world and elsewhere." This statement pretty much sums up the man and his work.

Born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1921, Jaffee grew up in a small town in Lithuania. He and his parents returned to the United States in the early 1930s and settled in the New York area. "Jaffee quickly learned that his natural ability for creating humorous pictures helped gain acceptance from the neighborhood youth," says Nick Meglin in *The Art of Humorous Illustration.* "The sidewalks and walls became a gallery for the fledging cartoonist as he produced Popeye, Dick Tracy, and other cartoon favorites for his delighted companions."

After attending Manhattan's High School of Music and Art, Jaffee tried his hand at professional cartooning. He first succeeded with a two-page monthly humor filler, *Inferior Man,* that he sold to *Military Comics.* This was the home of Blackhawk and his crew and was being edited at the time by Will Eisner. Jaffee also found a home at Marvel, working with a young editor named Stan Lee. For the funny animal title *Krazy Komics* Jaffee wrote and drew the saga of Ziggy Pig. In *Joker Comics* he gave the world Squat Car Squad, doing for the police department what Bill Holman was doing for the fire department in *Smokey Stover.* This feature was firmly in the screwball tradition; and Jaffee himself, wearing a beret, sometimes appeared along with his team of cops. His most notable fellow contributor in *Joker* was Basil Wolverton.

Jaffee spent the World War II years in the air force, where he got to do considerable artwork. He returned to comics, and Marvel, in 1946, laboring on such diverse titles as *Super Rabbit* and *Patsy Walker.* When Harvey Kurtzman converted *Mad* from comic book to magazine format in 1955, Jaffee, an old friend from Music and Art days, was one of the new recruits. "Al was a very efficient comic book funnyman," Kurtzman has said. Although he stayed on with *Mad* after Kurtzman departed, Jaffee also contributed to such later Kurtzman newsstand ventures as *Trump* and *Humbug.*

Jaffee branched out into newspapers in 1958, when Publishers Syndicate took on his *Tall Tales.* This skinny, unorthodox gag panel ran until 1965. Such showcases and his continued visibility in *Mad* helped bring him to the attention of advertising agency art directors, and he began to supplement his income by illustrating print ads huckstering such products as Benson & Hedges 100s and Passport Scotch. His colleagues in the National Cartoonists Society (NCS) honored him in 1973 with an award for his advertising work. In collaboration with *Mad* he's also produced a highly successful series of paperback books, notably his *Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions* series.

Jaffee is a great believer in clarity and simplicity. "If brevity is the soul of wit," he says, "it follows that overstatement can be the death of it." His admirers, such as Joe Brancatelli, extol the snap and brilliance of his writing and the directness of his drawing—"with little emphasis on anatomic perfection, but with considerable time devoted to humorous effect." Jaffee has explained, "I feel restrained when asked to work more representationally. . . . Perhaps the quality that attracted me most to humorous illustration is its inherent freedom."

He's a humorous fellow away from the drawing board as well. "Unlike many humorists who reserve their talent for the printed page," observes Meglin, "Jaffee is as entertaining in person as on paper." And he enjoys his work a great deal. "I find the act of drawing stimulating and pleasurable," he says. "Once started . . . I'm always amazed at how much I enjoy working, and I'm completely baffled by the lethargy that kept me from plunging in. Even little things, such as the sound of the pen scratching the paper or an accidental spot of ink that works, are satisfying to me."

Al Jaffee drew this at the dawn of his career. Copyright © 1942 Quality Comics, Inc.

MIKE KALUTA

He has drawn some superheroes during his twenty or so years in comics, but they've never been among Kaluta's favorite characters. He is much more at home with fantasy, science fiction, and the sort of spooky mystery associated with the pulp magazine crimefighters of the 1930s and 1940s. He first got together with the most famous pulp mystery man of them all, the Shadow, in the early 1970s for DC and he returned to him again recently to turn out an impressive graphic novel for Marvel.

Michael William Kaluta was born in 1947 and grew up in Richmond, Virginia. He lists a wide range of artists as his influences, among them Frank Frazetta, Al Williamson, Maxfield Parrish, and Aubrey Beardsley. Among his favorite writers are Edgar Rice Burroughs and Philip K. Dick. Another major influence on Kaluta's approach to storytelling has been the movies. "You cannot be a comic book artist without seeing *Citizen Kane,"* he has said. Orson Welles's film was originally released in 1941 and by now has influenced several generations of comic book artists. Another of Kaluta's favorite directors is Carol Reed, and he adds, "You can't become a comic book artist without seeing *The Third Man.* You've just got to see it . . . something that's going to change your perspective."

His earliest published work appeared in the fanzine *Graphic Showcase* in 1966. He broke into comics in 1969 and drew a variety of romance, war, and Western stories for Charlton. Kaluta was living in Manhattan by this time, associating with such artists as Williamson, Roy Krenkel, and Ralph Reese. By the early 1970s he was working for DC. During this period Detective Comics, Inc. had licensed several Burroughs characters (most notably, Tarzan), including one of the characters featured in Burroughs's *Weird Worlds, Carson of Venus.* Kaluta got the job of illustrating these adaptations of the adventures of his boyhood idol. Kaluta was already being called a "rising star" and winning awards by this time.

It was in the early 1970s that Kaluta had his first stint with the Shadow. The mysterious Shadow had been around for more than four decades—in the pulp magazine novels of Walter Gibson, on the radio, in B movies, and in a newspaper strip. The first comic book version had appeared back in 1940. That earlier Shadow, although scripted by Gibson, was based on the radio character, the fellow who had the power to cloud men's minds so they thought he was invisible. The Shadow that DC revived in 1973 was much closer to the vengeful foe of crookdom who had flourished in the pages of the pulp magazine. "The most fun I ever had," Kaluta told *The Comics Journal* in 1985, regarding his work on the character. "Because he went against everything that a hero was supposed to be. He was a killer, he was a madman, and he was a law unto himself. And he had a bunch of tag-along people that were half-baked heroes who need someone like him for them to feel fulfilled."

Kaluta's Shadow was straight out of the pages of the pulps, a grim, hawk-nosed figure wrapped in dark cloak, with the brim of his slouch hat pulled low and a .45 automatic clutched in his fist. The layouts were eccentric and moody, confirming Kaluta's admiration for the cinema of Orson Welles. Unfortunately, Kaluta only lasted six issues with *The Shadow.* The magazine itself only survived for another half-dozen after his departure.

In the years since then, Kaluta has worked on various projects for DC, including Superman. He has drawn science fiction, horror stories, and covers for Marvel. He has branched out into book illustration and has also done record jackets. In 1985, teaming with writer Elaine Lee, he did what proved to be a miniseries for Marvel's Epic line. *Starstruck* was a satirical science fiction saga with aspirations beyond that of the usual space opera sort of comic book. It was aimed at an older audience and the artwork reflects Kaluta's increasing fascination with the work of European artists, particularly Moebius. "I adore anything that Moebius does," says Kaluta. "His work always takes an unusual point of view, and it is generally more of a slice of life than a story, unlike most American comics." Interviewed by *The Comics Journal* while he was still working on *Starstruck,* Kaluta remarked, "It's a lot of fun drawing. It's not like I'm drawing somebody sitting in a blank room talking to themselves. . . . There's sexy androids with personalities and mysterious women moving through it, people thumbing their noses at other people, girls with guns and freckles."

Early in 1988 Marvel published the *Shadow* graphic novel, penciled by Kaluta and inked by Russ Heath. After this reunion with the Shadow, Kaluta went to work on a *Starstruck* spinoff for Comico. It seems safe to predict that whatever he draws next, it'll be something he considers fun.

CYCLE 140
ANARCHERA
CLUB NEBB™
ON THE PLANET
HYDRANGEA
members only
no riff-raff
"THE TWO 'TEOMAN' SLIPPED RAGHS FROM THEIR ZRAQ, IN ONE MOTION SLICED THE ARTERY INSIDE THE LEFT THIGH, AND MELTED TO THE FLOOR IN A SINGLE POOL OF BLOOD. THEN SHE LOOKED UP. SHE WAS SMILIN'... AT ME."
-OLD SAILORS NEVER DIE BY HUGO AWARD WINNING AUTHOR, RONNIE LEE ELLIS
THIS IS GOING TO HURT YOU A WHOLE LOT MORE THAN IT'S GOING TO HURT US.
NORM! PACK THIS ONE ON ICE TAGGED FOR SUB-LEVEL 5 AND SEND IT DOWN TO THE LAB.
yap!
yap!
yap!
UH... I WAS THINKING...
yap!
yap!
HOLD! VERLOONA IMAGINES A WEARY LITTLE THOUGHT, STRUGGLING FROM SYNAPSE TO DISTANT SYNAPSE... ALONE AND ONLY.
BINGLE! BANGLE! SIT!
DON'T THINK, NORM... IT ISN'T IN YOUR JOB DESCRIP-TION.
AND NORM?
YES, VERLOONA?
SEE THAT WE ARE NOT DISTURBED FOR SEVERAL MARBECS!
yap!

In the much-heralded first issue of *Starstruck,* Elaine Lee and Kaluta team up for the comic book that evolved from the graphic novel that evolved from a play. Copyright © 1984 Elaine Lee and Michael Wm. Kaluta.

FRED KIDA

He's done a wide variety of commendable work since he entered comics back in the 1940s, drawing everything from superheroes to hardboiled true crime. But Fred Kida will always be best remembered for one of his earliest jobs, since he was the artist who gave the definitive look to Airboy and his fiery flying lady Valkyrie. Recently the characters have been successfully revived, yet no one has been able to rival the quality of Kida's approach.

Kida was born in New York in 1920 and studied advertising art. By the time he came of age there was a booming comic book business flourishing in Manhattan, so when he got hired by the Will Eisner shop, he turned his back on the ad game. Kida's earliest work was a war adventure feature called *The Phantom Clipper,* which ran in the Eisner-edited *Military Comics* along with *Blackhawk.* "Milton Caniff was my main influence at the time," Kida has said. "Like a lot of boys I learned to draw by tracing and copying his *Terry* Sunday pages." But unlike most boys, Kida fully assimilated the Caniff style and added something of his own. His pages in *Military* are nicely laid out, lushly inked, and free of swipes.

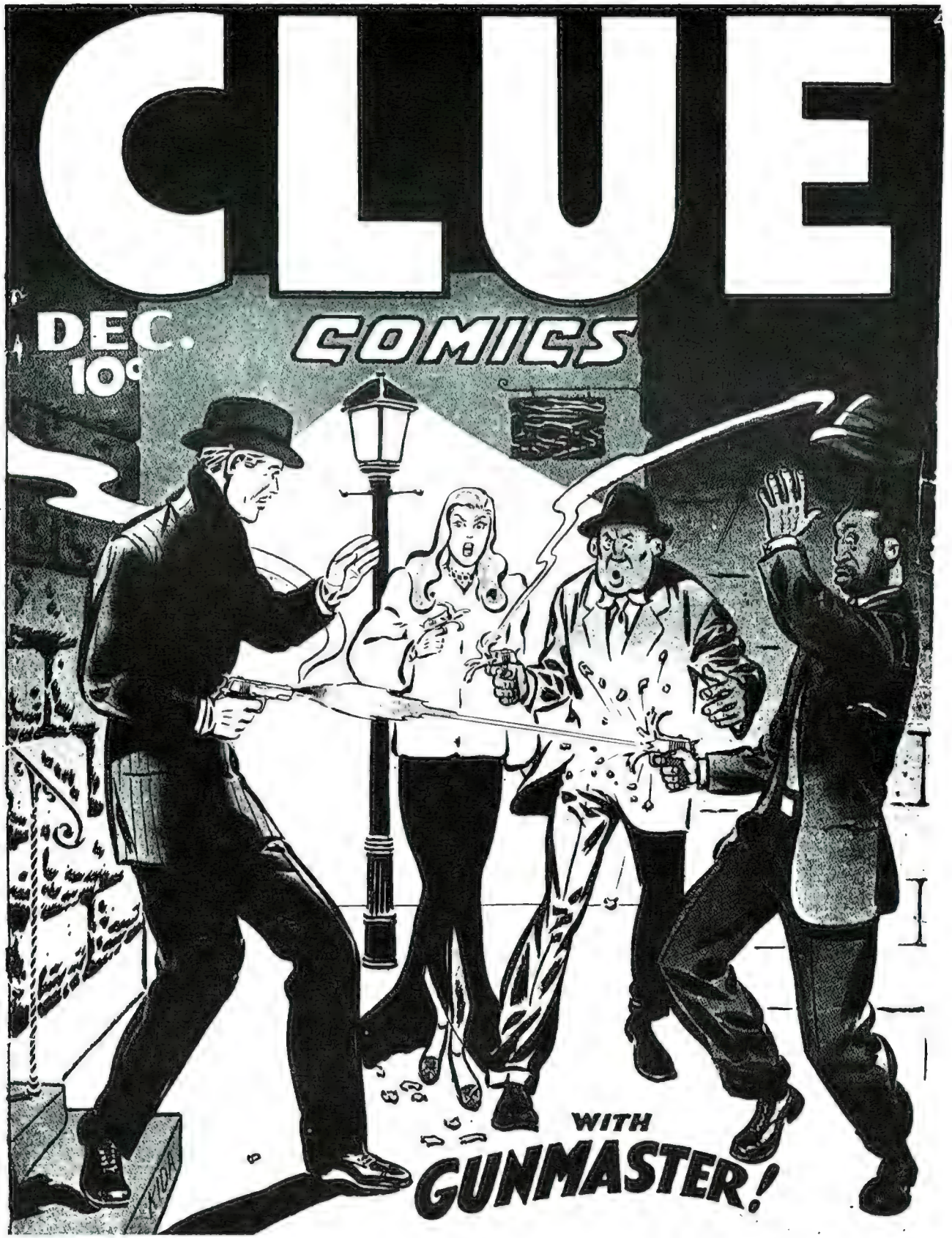
Next he teamed up with Bob Fujitani to produce some fairly gruesome adventures of *Hangman* for *Pep Comics.* Then he connected with the Hillman outfit to draw for *Air Fighters Comics.* The most successful character the magazine had was Airboy, a teenage daredevil aviator who'd been created by Charles Biro, anonymously, to beef up the contents. *Airboy,* like Biro's *Crimebuster* in *Boy Comics,* blended action, violence, bloodshed, adolescent angst, and a touch of sex—which proved a salable formula. Kida developed his impressionistic, Caniff-inspired style further on *Airboy.* He inked with a "big, fat Winsor and Newton brush." Fellow artists, such as Alex Toth, were impressed and inspired by the work. "Kida demonstrated a rich sense of drama in his underlying black-and-white art," Toth has said. "He produced powerful blacks, mixed with myriad textures and patterns, to contrast his open whites which, assisted by sharp coloring, reproduced very well—with clarity and strength."

James Steranko was another admirer of Kida's *Airboy.* "The unifying element of his style was his remarkable use of dark areas (artists call it 'spotting blacks')," he has written. "Kida's highly conscious placement of shadows and silhouettes added new dimension to the strip. . . . The drawing itself was solid and sensible. Inking was clean and forceful, always with a brush. Panels were well composed and utilized a wealth of background detail. As for the planes in the strip, Kida drew them better than anyone."

Kida moved into newspaper comics briefly in 1946, when he took over a modestly successful strip titled *Judge Wright.* This daily, a combination of sexy soap opera and *noir* crime drama, had begun in the autumn of the previous year with script by Bob Bernstein, a *Crime Does Not Pay* scriptwriter, and art by Kida's friend and colleague Bob Fujitani. Kida used his strong black-and-white technique on the strip, but there's a hurried look to his work. The stories weren't much good, dealing heavily in hokum and using characters with such names as Larry Languor and Grapeface. Kida stuck with *Judge Wright* less than a year.

In the immediate postwar years he put in time with the Lev Gleason company, where Biro was the editor. Kida drew for *Crime Does Not Pay* and for Biro's shortlived, adult-oriented comic book *Tops.* His style was slicker now, less shadowy. This was chiefly due to the fact that Biro had come to believe that comic book pages needed lots of dialogue balloons and simplified, uncluttered drawing that would take basic color easily. "Gleason and Biro insisted on all outlines, with no blacks," Kida has said. "I didn't like it too much, but I was working for them and it was just a matter of doing it their way."

Kida seems never to have actively courted fame, and a good deal of his work in later years was uncredited. He worked on a variety of books for Marvel—war, Western, horror, and other genres. He assisted on both the *Flash Gordon* and the *Steve Canyon* newspaper strips, and in the early 1980s, he was responsible for penciling the *Spider-Man* newspaper strip. A book of his *Airboy* stories, those dealing with the sultry and initially evil-hearted lady flyer called Valkyrie, was reprinted in 1982; and more recently both Airboy and Valkyrie have been resurrected by Eclipse Comics. Thus far Kida has had little to do with the refurbished characters, but Eclipse has also reprinted some of Kida's *Airboy* stories and perhaps a little more attention will now be paid to at least some of the excellent work he's done over the years.



A handsome Kida cover, plus some slick marksmanship. Copyright © 1946 Hillman Periodicals.

BOB LUBBERS

Although his specialty was pretty women, Lubbers could draw just about everything else as well. He entered comic books in 1940, and over the next decade, he applied his lively style to depicting everything from jungle girls to combat pilots. He then moved on to the funny papers, where he was responsible for several of the best-looking strips of the 1950s and 1960s.

He was born on Long Island in 1922 and fell under the spell of the funnies while still in grammar school. He remembers being especially fond of a cowboy strip, adapted from a Zane Grey novel, that ran in the Brooklyn *Eagle.* He attended the Art Students League in Manhattan, and there he met Stan Drake. Comic books were in the process of becoming big business, and he and Drake heard that the Centaur company was looking for artists. They both took around samples and both got hired.

Lubbers's maiden effort was *Reef Kincaid,* a slam-bang feature about an adventurer who tangled with monsters, wild natives, and, of course, beautiful women. The strip ran in *Amazing Man Comics* and displayed Lubbers's gifts for depicting action and laying out a story. As he recalls, he was paid $6 per page—$5 for the drawing and an extra buck because he also wrote the stuff.

While associated with Centaur, Lubbers also drew the title feature in *Liberty Scouts,* a trio of militarily inclined young men; and he took over the Arrow for the red-clad bowman's final appearances. He saw the Masked Marvel to his final resting place and drew the adventures of a spy-bashing youth known as "Star Spangles" Branner for a Centaur-produced comic book given away by the Chicago Mail Order Company. Around the time the Second World War was starting for America, Centaur moved on to other sorts of publications.

Next Lubbers went to Fiction House, that citadel of Good Girl Art. T. T. Scott, the publisher, lived in the same Long Island town as the young cartoonist and invited him to drop in at his New York offices. The next nine years, with time out for service in the air force, Lubbers was one of the stars of Fiction House. His father had been a pilot during World War I, and drawing airplanes was another of Lubbers's specialties. He did dozens of attractive covers for *Wings Comics* and handled the airborne adventures of Captain Wings. He also became the illustrator of several of Fiction House's sexy heroines. For *Fight Comics* there was Senorita Rio; for *Jungle Comics,* the sparsely clad Camilla; and for *Rangers Comics,* the redheaded cowgirl known as Firehair. Lubbers maintains that neither Scott nor his editors ever instructed him to emphasize the female form in his stories for Fiction House. They didn't dissuade him either, and he's always enjoyed drawing pretty women.

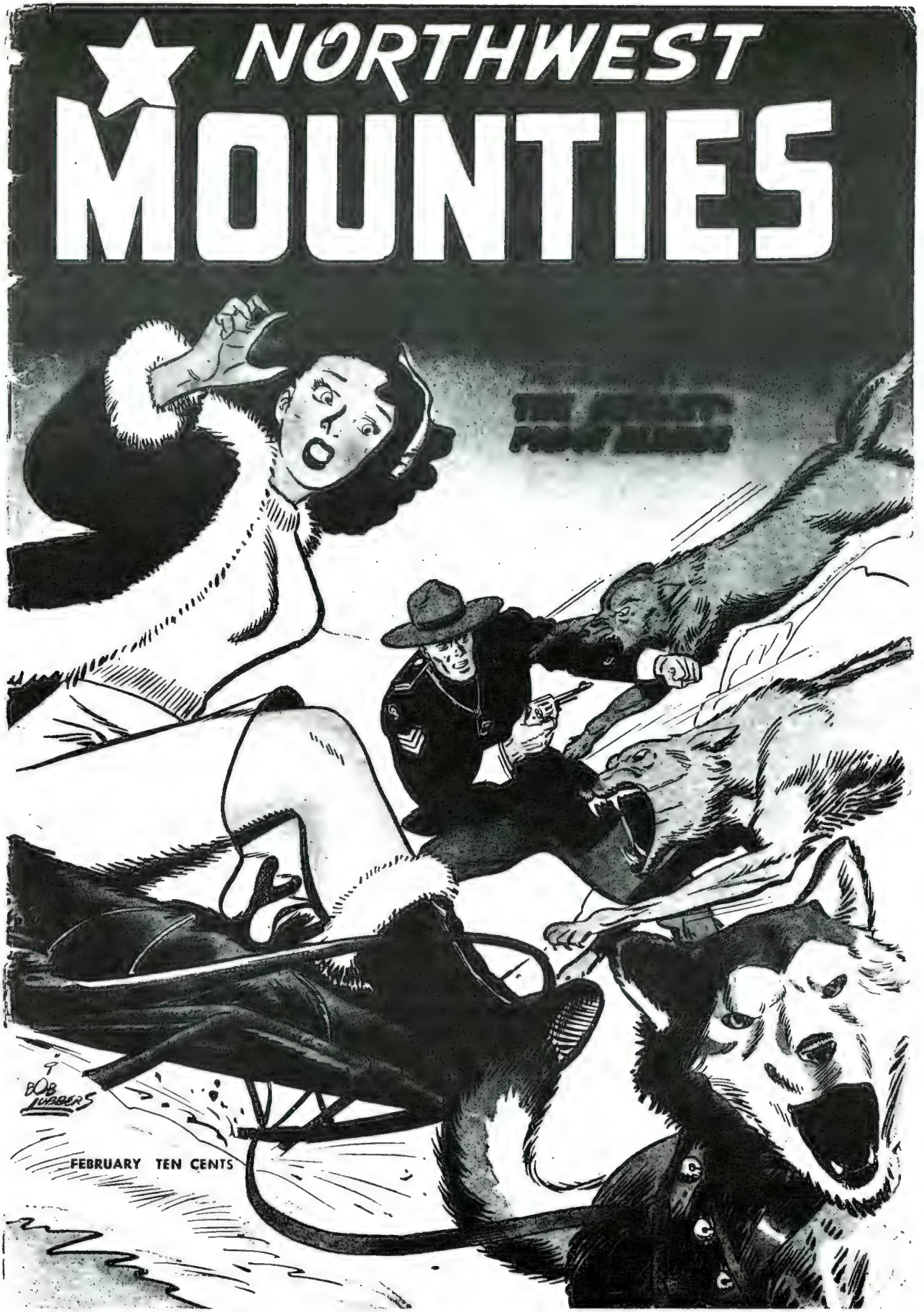
His *Jungle* experience came in handy when the United Features Syndicate invited him, in 1950, to take over the *Tarzan* strip. The jungle lord still had an impressive list of papers at the time, and Lubbers put a great deal of work into the feature, daily and Sunday. His graceful people, flora, and fauna were a distinct improvement over those of the departing artist Burne Hogarth, who seems to have felt that everything—even the trees—ought to have lots of muscles.

It was perhaps inevitable that Lubbers's art would come to the attention of Al Capp, one of the leading depictors and appreciators of the female form. Capp was still doing *Li'l Abner* for United Features at the time he invited Lubbers to abandon the jungle man and team up with him on a new strip. The result was *Long Sam,* which dealt with a young woman who was, like Abner, a rural type possessed of an overwhelming innocence and a considerable attractiveness to the opposite sex. Her adventures with city slickers and other urban types formed the basis for the continuities. The strip ran from 1954 until 1962 and then faded away. "Lubbers's art was always exciting," says comics historian Richard Marschall, "supple, full of motion, with a command of composition and anatomy."

Lubbers, who's always been able to work rapidly, felt he could take on another strip while turning out *Long Sam.* From 1960 to 1967, using the penname Bob Lewis, he drew *Secret Agent X-9* for King Features. In the 1950s and 1960s he ghosted, for short spells, *The Saint, Rusty Riley, Big Ben Bolt,* and his longtime friend Stan Drake's *The Heart of Juliet Jones.*

In 1968 Lubbers had one last fling with a newspaper strip of his own, when he created *Robin Malone* for NEA. He says now he was never quite sure what direction the feature should take, and so it fluctuated between soap opera and satire. It ceased the following year. He had advance notice of the cancellation, so he was able to fashion one of the more memorable finishes for a comic strip. In the final panel on the final day, we see Robin falling to her death from a skyscraper.

In 1970 he again teamed up with Capp, this time to do the penciling on *Li'l Abner.* He stuck with that until just before the end of the strip in the late 1970s. Now and then over the years he's returned briefly to comic books, but never for very long. He's made his living for quite a while as an advertising artist. Content, Lubbers doesn't think he'll return to comics again. But if the right pretty girl came along . . .



Nobody could fit a pretty girl into a dynamic cover design better than Lubbers.
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RUSS MANNING

Russ Manning was one of several artists who gained his chief fame from drawing Tarzan. Like Burne Hogarth, J. Allen St. John, and Jesse Marsh, he is best remembered for his association with the lord of the jungle.

Russell Manning was born in Southern California in 1929, not far from Edgar Rice Burroughs's adopted hometown of Tarzana. After high school, he studied at the Los Angeles Art Institute and in 1950 he was drafted. When he returned from the service, having drawn maps for the army and cartoons for the base newspaper, Manning went to work for the Los Angeles–based Western Publishing, which was packaging and printing all the Dell comic books. It was his friend Jesse Marsh, whom Manning considered an "old master," who helped him get the job. Manning's earliest work was *Brothers of the Spear,* a backup feature in Marsh's *Tarzan.* Although Manning admired Marsh's Caniff-inspired style, he didn't draw the same way. Manning's work was firmly in the Alex Raymond–Hal Foster camp, with a neat, crisp look and emphasis on the heroic, larger-than-life aspects of the yarns he was telling.

The Dell–Western comics of the period were devoted chiefly to adaptations of successful movie and television properties—from Donald Duck and Bugs Bunny to Gene Autry and Davy Crockett. Manning says that the Western Publishing Co., Inc., was turning out books that were "absolutely above reproach"; and thus, during the troubled 1950s, when EC came near to collapse and dozens of other companies went out of business in the wake of criticisms and investigations about sex and violence in the comics, "We had all the work we could handle." Manning drew—in his confident, meticulous style—*Wyatt Earp, Rawhide, 77 Sunset Strip, Sea Hunt, Danny Thomas,* and adaptations of movies like *Ben-Hur* and *Rob Roy.* He became an expert at drawing the weapons, props, and decor of a wide range of times and climes.

One of the things about Western that apparently didn't please Manning was the company policy forbidding artists to sign their work. Like several of his colleagues (notably Alex Toth), he worked out ingenious ways to slip his initials or his name into his pages. Once, according to a colleague, Manning lettered his name on the front of a cafeteria in the background of a scene. What he'd forgotten was that there was a chain of Manning's Cafeterias in greater Los Angeles at the time, and an astute editor whited out the name to keep from giving the chain a free plug.

Early in 1963 Dell put forth an original science fiction title, *Magnus, Robot Fighter,* with artwork by Manning. He did an impressive job on the massive, bleak futuristic cities and the mean-minded mechanisms therein. "He drew *Magnus* with flair and imagination," comics historian Richard Kyle has said; "and with a fidelity to literary science fiction unmatched by any other science fiction artist."

From the far-off future, Manning moved again to the jungle, taking over the *Tarzan* comic book in the mid-1960s. A fan of Burroughs's novels, Manning returned *Tarzan* to the look and feel of an earlier day. Many fans were quite taken with this more bravura version of the famous apeman. ERB, Inc. was impressed as well. They saw to it that Manning took over the daily *Tarzan* newspaper strip in 1967 and the Sunday page the following year. He put considerable work into the job and once again the strip was filled with lush and mysterious jungles, imposing ruined cities, vicious barbarians, and marauding wild animals, as well as a satisfying number of pretty women.

Hardcore *Tarzan* followers were enthusiastic about the Manning version and *The World Encyclopedia of Comics* went so far as to say, "Russ Manning has been hailed in the United States and in Europe as *Tarzan's* third great comic strip artist (along with Hal Foster and Burne Hogarth)." Unfortunately, by this time the feature was no longer selling well, especially in America. Manning gave up the daily in 1973 and the Sunday a few years later. He also drew a series of *Tarzan* graphic novels for the European market.

A *Star Wars* comic strip, one of the many merchandising spinoffs of George Lucas's blockbuster movie, was introduced in the late 1970s. Manning was chosen to draw it. His stay with the new feature was relatively short, since increasing ill health forced him to abandon it. "He was always modest," Kyle has said. "In his gentlemanly way, however, he conveyed that he believed that no one ever did his work as well as he."

Manning died in 1982.

IT'S MAGNUS! SAVE US, MAGNUS!
BEHIND ME, LEEJA! QUICKLY!
IN A WAVE, THE HOWLING, PLAGUE-RIDDEN ROBOTS SMASH THROUGH THE CITY...
SQU-U-AAAAAW!
SAVE US! SAVE US!
OH, MAGNUS-!
LIKE A MIGHTY ROCK, MAGNUS MEETS THE FORCE OF THE ROBOTS' MAD RUSH...
SQU-E-E-E-E-O
OOOH-!
DON'T LET THEM HURT US!

Russ Manning's *Magnus, Robot Fighter, 4000 A.D.* takes on hard metal with his bare fists. Copyright © 1964 K.K. Publications, Inc.

NORMAN MAURER

Maurer enjoyed a career unlike that of any other comic book artist. He went from drawing costumed crime-fighters to writing and producing Three Stooges movies. Along the way he also managed to work on the first 3-D comic books and to produce science fiction films.

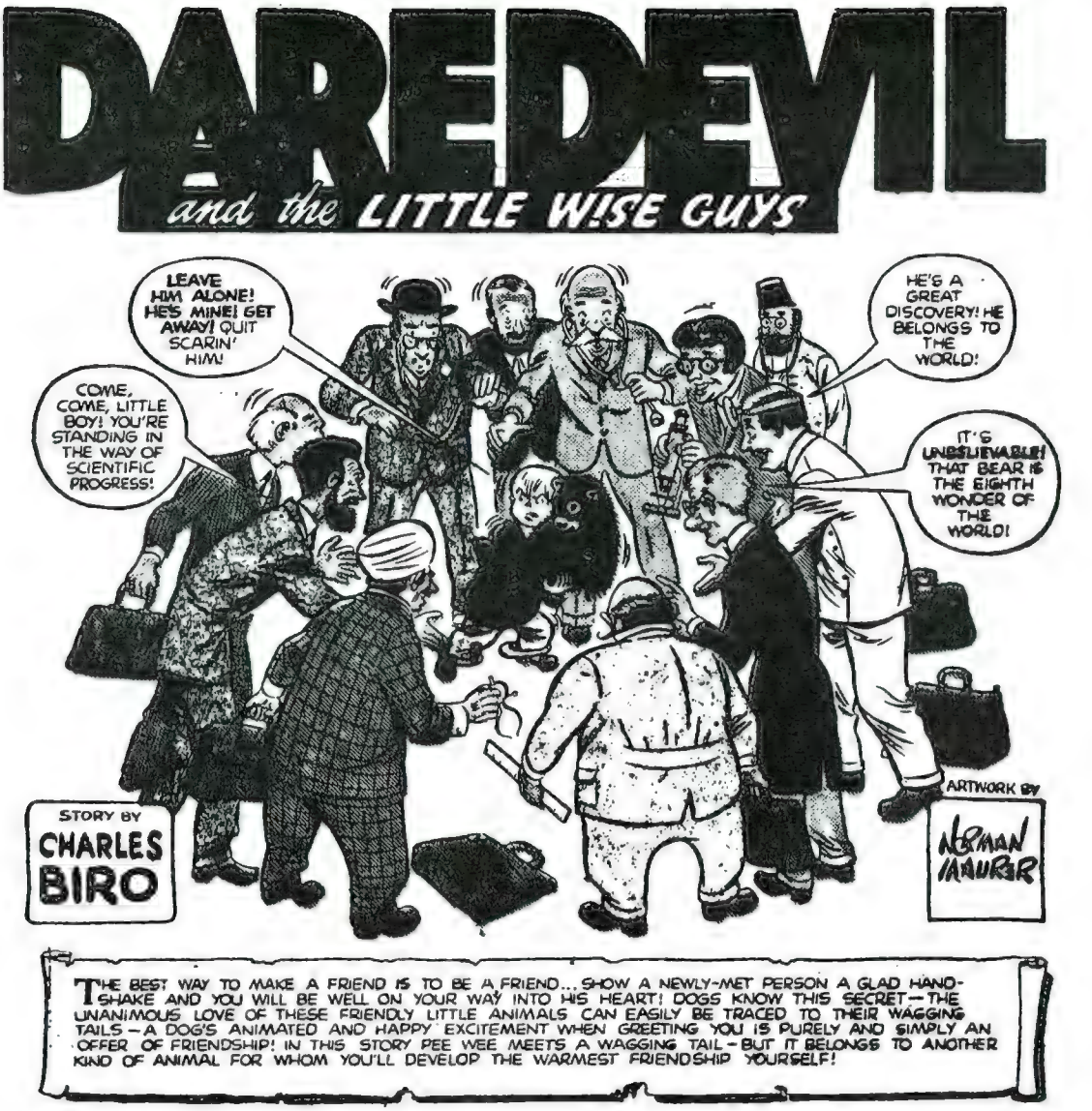
He was born in Brooklyn in 1926 and was yet another cartoonist who found work in comics while still in his teens. He studied at the High School of Music and Art in Manhattan, where one of his fellow students was Joe Kubert. They became immediate friends and, because of a mutual interest in comics, influenced each others' work. "Joe and I were pretty big hooky players," Maurer once told interviewer Shel Dorf. "We played a lot of hooky and we'd go back home, draw our little samples, and bring them over to the publishers in New York; get a little advice and go back and do new samples. I think that's the way we learned."

In the early 1940s Maurer became a protégé of Charles Biro, who was drawing for and coediting *Daredevil* and *Boy Comics* for the Lev Gleason publishing outfit. "Charlie took a liking to me," Maurer said, "and for the next seven or eight years treated me like a son." Maurer first worked at cleaning up other people's artwork, then moved up to inking for Biro. The company's two leading characters were Daredevil—the original hero with the distinctive red and blue costume and the spiked belt, no relation to Marvel's later superhero of the same name—and a teenage crimebuster known, simply, as Crimebuster. Biro produced some violent and fairly sexy material in his early months with these features. Gradually, he swung toward humane and socially aware continuities. By that time Maurer was penciling as well as inking both the features. Maurer's work became more sophisticated to match the more mature and responsible stories Biro was writing. Although Maurer's style showed some of the Biro influence, it owed much more to the work of Milton Caniff. Perhaps Biro was trying to compensate for the still bloody material he was using in *Crime Does Not Pay;* Maurer worked on that one, too.

After a hitch in the navy, Maurer settled down in Southern California and married the daughter of Moe Howard, the ringleader of the Three Stooges comedy team (the one with the bangs). Maurer continued his comic book activities from the West Coast, working for Biro until the Gleason magazines ceased publication in the mid-1950s. In 1953 Maurer teamed up with Kubert to produce a line of comics for St. John—Kubert and the publisher were in the East, Maurer remained in the West. Their new titles included *Tor;* a *Mad* simulacrum titled *Whack;* and *The Three Stooges.* Maurer and Kubert had tried a couple of issues of a Stooges comic book back in 1949 but that venture hadn't been a success. The earliest issues of the St. John titles were in 3-D, and Maurer also had a hand in the 3-D *Mighty Mouse.* Initially the novelty of the 3-D treatment, complete with red and green cellophane spectacles, resulted in significant sales. Quite soon, however, the bottom dropped out and St. John lost substantial amounts. This led to the cancellation of all the Kubert-Maurer titles, 3-D and otherwise. Maurer worked next for Marvel and then left the field for almost fifteen years.

He kept himself quite busy during the hiatus, working as a movie producer/director/writer. He was associated with *Angry Red Planet* (1959), *The Three Stooges Meet Hercules* (1961), *The Three Stooges in Orbit* (1962), and *The Outlaws Is Coming* (1965), among other films. He later produced animated Stooges shows for Saturday morning television.

In the early 1970s Maurer started drawing for comic books again, doing jobs for the DC war title, *Our Army at War,* which Kubert was editing. Maurer's pages were very well done, though somewhat subdued in comparison to his Golden Age work. By the mid-1970s he was again giving all his attention to his Hollywood activities. He died in 1986.


DAREDEVIL
and the LITTLE WISE GUYS
LEAVE HIM ALONE! HE'S MINE! GET AWAY! QUIT SCARIN' HIM!
COME, COME, LITTLE BOY! YOU'RE STANDING IN THE WAY OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS!
HE'S A GREAT DISCOVERY! HE BELONGS TO THE WORLD!
IT'S UNBELIEVABLE! THAT BEAR IS THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD!
STORY BY CHARLES BIRO
ARTWORK BY NORMAN MAURER
THE BEST WAY TO MAKE A FRIEND IS TO BE A FRIEND... SHOW A NEWLY-MET PERSON A GLAD HAND-SHAKE AND YOU WILL BE WELL ON YOUR WAY INTO HIS HEART! DOGS KNOW THIS SECRET—THE UNANIMOUS LOVE OF THESE FRIENDLY LITTLE ANIMALS CAN EASILY BE TRACED TO THEIR WAGGING TAILS—A DOG'S ANIMATED AND HAPPY EXCITEMENT WHEN GREETING YOU IS PURELY AND SIMPLY AN OFFER OF FRIENDSHIP! IN THIS STORY PEE WEE MEETS A WAGGING TAIL—BUT IT BELONGS TO ANOTHER KIND OF ANIMAL FOR WHOM YOU'LL DEVELOP THE WARMEST FRIENDSHIP YOURSELF!
I'VE GOT TEN CENTS!
HERE'S TWENTY-FIVE CENTS!
HELLO, WISE GUYS! WHAT'S GOING ON? AM I INTERRUPTING A BIG BUSINESS DEAL?
HECK, NO, DAREDEVIL! WE'RE JUST CHIPPING IN TO RAISE FIFTY CENTS SO WE CAN RENT ONE OF THOSE FANCY ENGLISH BIKES WITH GEARS FOR AN HOUR!
HE MEANS THE BIKE'S GOT THREE SPEEDS, D.D.!
SHOP
BICYCLES FOR HIRE
SOUNDS GREAT, FELLERS! JUST SEE THAT YOU'RE CAREFUL! BE SURE NOT TO RIDE IT DOWN HERE IN THE BUSINESS DISTRICT!
AW, SURE, D.D.! MATTER OF FACT, WE WANT TO TAKE IT OUT TO THE PARK TO SEE HOW THOSE GEARS WORK ON HILLS!
GOOD! WELL, HAVE FUN! JUST TAKE IT EASY! THERE'VE BEEN TOO MANY TRAGIC BICYCLE ACCIDENTS CAUSED BY CARELESSNESS!
DON'T WORRY, DAREDEVIL, YOU CAN TRUST US!

The two-color hero Daredevil speaks wisely on the dangers of three-speed bicycles (story by Charles Biro).

DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI

It's possible that Mazzucchelli, like other comic book artists over the years, is just passing through the field. The amount of work he's done is relatively small, yet it has brought him considerable praise and recognition. Mazzucchelli drew two long-established heroes—Marvel's Daredevil and DC's Batman—and brought something fresh to each. In his short career he's definitely established himself as a contender.

Mazzucchelli, an early comics fan, was studying painting in college in the early 1980s when he got interested again in comic books. It was Frank Miller's *Daredevil* that rekindled his interest. As he told *Amazing Heroes* in 1986, the book was "well drawn, it was well written, and I hadn't seen a book of that quality in some time." Inspired, he began to send samples to both DC and to Marvel. Marvel came through first with an offer and he got a *Master of Kung Fu* assignment. He is not especially proud of that maiden effort—"It took a year for me to get work after that." He next did an Indiana Jones feature, and then Daredevil in the mid-1980s. "I was very aware of the fact that I was new and that my work had a lot of problems that still had to be worked out," he has admitted. "It was a little bit frightening, the idea of working on *that* particular book, which would lead to inevitable comparisons."

Nonetheless, Mazzucchelli did a commendable job of learning while doing. Both his basic drawing and his staging of Denny O'Neil's stories became increasingly assured. "The drawing was getting better all the time, but my sense of design hadn't really come into play yet," he says. "So I was very consciously trying to work on that with each book, trying to pull that together . . . so that it was more than just having each fixture and each panel drawn well, so that each page would come together coherently, for the story to flow from start to finish. Inking my work helped that, simply because I had more control."

Eventually Frank Miller returned to *Daredevil,* as writer only. He expressed considerable enthusiasm for Mazzucchelli's work. "David is one of the major artistic talents to come to the field in many years. He brings an understanding of the emotional moment and a meticulous description of that moment that makes him a dream to write for. . . . His sensitivity and background in classic art combine to make his drawings powerful, evocative, and unpretentious." Praise indeed, especially coming from the fellow whose own work had nudged Mazzucchelli into comics in the first place.

Early in 1987 Miller, as a writer, and Mazzucchelli moved to DC for what is undoubtedly Mazzucchelli's best job yet. The project was four issues of *Batman* that formed a miniseries titled *Batman Year One.* The artist took another step forward with the series. His drawing was confident and thoughtful, and it had few of the trappings and visual clichés of traditional costumed hero material. He created very well the buildings and the people of gritty Gotham City, where Miller's hardboiled retelling of Batman's early days unfolded. Mazzucchelli's Gotham was very close to the tarnished but still exciting Manhattan of the 1980s.

Mazzucchelli was letting himself be influenced by other artists now, some of them outside the accepted comic book tradition—such as newspaper artists Roy Crane, Milton Caniff, and Chester Gould—and others who were mavericks within the tradition, most notably the irrepressible Alex Toth. Speaking of Toth, Mazzucchelli has observed, "The simplicity is very appealing to me. The ability to let a flat surface lie and not feel compelled to get in there and render something." He has also said, "When you're drawing, you're able to turn the whole world on its end, to flatten things out, to make things huge, to bend the line in any number of directions. You can create a new reality—a reality of pen and ink, if you will." What Mazzucchelli has been able to do is to assimilate the approaches of others rather than merely to ape their panels, as some of his colleagues do.

Recently Mazzucchelli was involved with the reprinting of the *Batman* material in a single graphic album. At this writing it's not certain what his next venture in comic books will be.

IT'S A HOT DAY. LIKE ALL THE REST. ALL TWO YEARS OF THEM.
TWO YEARS... AND THE MOTION PICTURE EPIC THAT TURNED INTO JUST ANOTHER COME-ON ISN'T EVEN A MEMORY...
...YEAH, I'M SURE I SEEN ONE OF YOUR FLICKS. YOU'RE BIG AT THE STAG PARTIES.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME AGAIN?
PAGE. KAREN PAGE.
LIKE ALL THE REST. EXCEPT THIS ONE HAS A SPECIAL GLOW TO IT. IT'S NOT EVERY DAY YOU SELL YOUR SOUL.
THAT'S NO WAY TO THINK. GROW UP. IT'S THE EIGHTIES. YOU DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO.
AND YOU HAVE TO DO IT...
LOOK, THIS IS WORTH SOMETHING.
TAKE IT TO THE STATES AND YOU'LL GET A MILLION FOR IT.
GIRL WILL SAY LOTS WHEN SHE'S HUNGRY. THINGS I HEAR...
WANT A SHOT? NO, DIDN'T THINK SO -- NOT A SHOT OF BOOZE, ANYWAY...
DAREDEVIL. OKAY? I SAID IT. I SAID THE NAME.
AND HE'S GOT ANOTHER NAME. AND IT'S WRITTEN DOWN RIGHT HERE. YOU WANT IT OR NOT?

David Mazzucchelli's Daredevil is all red, but it's the beautiful work he does with light and shadow that make this page stand out. Copyright © 1985 Marvel Comics Group.

TARPE MILLS

Nearly as mysterious as the phantom ladies she once drew, Tarpe Mills has never been one to cooperate with biographers. "Since I value anonymity," she said recently, "I do not give out personal information." Furthermore, she would just as soon not be labeled a comic book artist at all. "As an illustrator and painter, I don't fancy being called a 'comic book' artist." Be that as it may, she was quite active in Golden Age comic books before she went on to create a successful newspaper strip. And she is highly thought of by such historians as Trina Robbins and Catherine Yronwode. In their *Women and the Comics,* they say that her earliest comic book work "shows her to have been a remarkably accomplished novice" and describe her later work as "wonderfully well drawn."

Mills had apparently worked as a model and then went into comics in the late 1930s, just as the field was starting to expand. She was in it for less than five years, working throughout that time for Lloyd Jacquet's Funnies, Inc. There was a relatively small number of women drawing comics in those years, and Mills was one of the few employed by Jacquet's shop. Though lady cartoonists are thought by some to specialize in a more romantic sort of cartooning, Mills concentrated on straight adventure material—hardboiled, no-frills stuff.

Her first features, which she also wrote, appeared in the Centaur line of magazines. Among them were *Daredevil Barry Finn* in *Amazing Mystery Funnies* and *Diana Deane in Hollywood* in *Funny Pages.* Finn was a blond soldier of fortune who tangled with mad scientists, giant insects, amphibian men, and the like. Mills seems to have been under the influence of Alex Raymond and his *Flash Gordon* when she commenced her career, but she rapidly developed a distinctive style of her own. Diana Deane's life in the movie capital never figured in the strip and what readers got was a serialized version of one of the blonde actress' movies—"Presenting the Third Episode of Diana Deane in *White Goddess,* an All-Technicolor Picture." As Robbins and Yronwode note, these features "all display her stylish and fashion-conscious approach to anatomy."

The fascination with Hollywood continued in her work in *Target Comics,* a comic book that debuted early in 1940. Packaged by Funnies, Inc., *Target* also showcased the work of Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, and Basil Wolverton. Mills produced *Fantastic Feature Films,* a sort of straight version of Ed Wheelan's *Minute Movies.* In each issue, her stock company of actors took part in a different feature film. Titles included *Dance of Death, Devil's Dust, The House of Horror,* and *The Blue Zombie.* A few months later *Heroic Comics* came along. The star of this one was Everett's Hydroman, but Mills had two backup strips—*Mann of India,* dealing with a handsome fellow named Chick Mann, "an American writer and adventurer residing in India." The other feature was *The Purple Zombie,* an enthusiastic mix of science fiction and horror. Mills was obviously enjoying herself on this zombie saga, filling it with walking skeletons, fiendish devices, violent confrontations—and drawing it all with a B-movie exuberance.

Since the advent and eventual impressive success of Superman, newspapers and feature syndicates had shown an increasing interest in comic book–type material. Superman branched out into the comic sections in 1939 and in 1940. Will Eisner created the Spirit especially for Sunday papers. Jack Wheeler, head of the Bell Syndicate, signed up Mills in 1941 while she was still working for Jacquet. Her *Miss Fury,* originally titled *Black Fury,* began its run on April 6, 1941, as a Sunday page. It was as fast-moving, violent, and action-packed as a comic book feature—and considerably sexier. Miss Fury was also tough. In her first month of Sundays, after surviving an auto crash, she clawed a detective across the face, stepped on his gun hand, kicked him in the head, then saw to it that a heavy almost went through the windshield of a car. Miss Fury didn't have any superpowers. By day she was lovely socialite Marla Drake; by night she slipped into a black leopard skin to fight crime. The strip continued for over a decade, and was at its best during the Second World War years, when it was full of ruthless female spies, daring Americans, Nazi villains of a distinct Erich von Stroheim cast, and strong *film noir* atmosphere and attitudes. Marvel reprinted *Miss Fury* in a series of eight comic books from 1942 to 1946, the first of which now sells for as much as $900. In 1979 Archival Press put out a *Miss Fury* trade paperback. Mills painted her black-clad heroine again for the cover.

Mills is alive and well in the vicinity of Manhattan. As noted earlier, she'd prefer not to be remembered for her work in comic books.

MANN OF INDIA
RUSHING THROUGH THE CURTAINED DOORWAY, THE KALLA KHAN PITCHES HEADLONG OVER THE CHAINS AND SEEING THE GLEAMING SCIMITAR, HE FRANTICALLY TWISTS···
MIRACULOUSLY MISSING THE RAZOR SHARP EDGE BY A HAIR!!
AS THE MURDEROUS KHAN SCRAMBLES TO HIS FEET WITH THE SCIMITAR, INDIRA SCOOPS UP A HEAVY URN AND····
HURLS IT WITH ALL HER MIGHT!
HERE ARE THE KEYS! NOW, TO GET FREE-- AND THEN TO SETTLE A SCORE WITH THESE TWO WITH THE AID OF THAT SCIMITAR HA!
WH--WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
WHAT'S THAT?
IT--IT SOUNDS LIKE A-- TIGER!!
QUICK! FOLLOW ME!
3

Tarpe Mills working with two of her specialties, violence and beautiful women. From *Mann of India.* Copyright © 1942 Famous Funnies, Inc.

ED MOORE

While some artists make a lifelong career of comics, others spend a few years at it and then go on to other things or simply drop from sight. Edward M. Moore did some very good and highly individual work in comic books in the late 1930s and early 1940s. He returned to the field for a few years after World War II and then left it. He was never a fan favorite, and his contributions are pretty much forgotten today. Yet he typifies many of the early comic book artists, people who did exceptional stuff for a while before dropping out.

He was born in Baltimore in 1918 and once claimed, "I taught myself to read studying comic strips." Moore sold his first comic book work in 1936, by mailing in unsolicited stories to such early titles as *Funny Pages* and *Funny Picture Stories.* He migrated to Chicago in 1937, where he attended the Academy of Fine Arts and got himself hired as an assistant to Norman Marsh on the then-popular detective strip *Dan Dunn.* Marsh was a feisty fellow, and the day Moore started, his new boss got into a fistfight with a former assistant who'd come in to demand his back pay. Nevertheless, Moore stayed with Marsh for two years before becoming an assistant on the *Don Winslow* strip. He turned that job over to Ken Ernst in 1940, when he started drawing a Sunday page of his own, titled *Captain Storm,* for the *Chicago Tribune's Comic Book Magazine.*

In his early work Moore had been under the spell of Alex Raymond, but while in Chicago he decided he really ought to have a style of his own. What he developed was a simpler, slightly cartoony approach to adventure features, one that emphasized design and the use of flat color. There had long been a Chicago style of cartooning—as exemplified by Chester Gould, Dick Moores, Frank King, and others—and what Moore worked out was his own individual version of it.

From 1939 to 1942 he drew and usually scripted several comic book features. For *Super Comics* there was a foreign correspondent named Jack Wander; for *Detective Comics* he did *Spy,* which had been created by Siegel and Shuster. Moore did *Armstrong of the Army* for *Star-Spangled Comics, Drafty* for *World's Finest,* and the original *Manhunter* for *Adventure Comics.* On all these, even the humorous *Drafty,* he demonstrated his individual way of telling a story and designing a page. His style was bold and uncluttered.

He spent the World War II years as an air force pilot and was proud of the fact that he "flew B-17s for over fifty missions in Europe without losing a man in my plane or a plane in my squadron when in command."

After getting out of the service, Moore came back to comic books. Things had changed somewhat while he was away, and slicker, more realistic styles—such as those of Alex Toth, Joe Kubert, and Dan Barry—were what publishers wanted. Moore drew very briefly for DC, then was able to get work with Lev Gleason on *Crime Does Not Pay* and related violent titles. He did true crime for Hillman's *Real Clue* and for EC's earliest cops-and-robbers books, as well as a lot of romance stories for some of Famous Funnies's love books. Moore was still turning out interesting pages, but much of his enthusiasm seemed to be gone.

Over the years he'd tried to sell another newspaper strip of his own, but without success. In 1954 he signed on as an assistant to Dick Brooks on his *Jackson Twins* strip. Eventually Moore was doing most of the drawing. He stayed with that until 1961. He also wrote for the *Joe Palooka* strip.

Moore had a somewhat unusual—and lucrative—hobby. He liked to enter contests. "I have entered enough statement, naming, and jingle contests," he once explained, "to win an airplane and several cars." When he went looking for advertisng work in the 1960s, the hobby experience was what landed him a job with a large Manhattan agency. He worked for them as a specialist in promotions and contests.

For a while in the late 1970s Moore did a small syndicated panel, but he never returned to comic books. He is presently working as a commercial artist in Florida.

JACK WANDER

THROUGH HIS PRESS CONNECTIONS, JACK MANAGES TO RENT A CAR— AND IN IT HE ROARS NORTH TOWARD CHATLEY— AND THE WILD BORDER COUNTRY IT OCCUPIES—
GREAT GUNS!! CHATLEY! WHAT A MESS!!
WELL, THE RED CROSS AND THE ARMY ARE TAKING CARE OF 'EM— SO THERE'S NOTHING FOR ME TO DO! NOW FOR THE MOUNTAINS—
OVER ROUGH ROADS—AROUND HAIRPIN TURNS, JACK MANEUVERS THE CAR— AND HIS EYES TURN EVER UPWARD—
EVERYBODY'S AT CHATLEY BECAUSE OF THE BOMBING— LEAVING THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY ENTIRELY DESERTED, AS I EXPECTED!— AND IF THE THING I FEAR COMES, IT SHOULD BE HERE SOON— FOR THE TIME IS RIPE!!
I'VE GOT TO KEEP CLOSE TO THE SEA— BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE THEY'LL COME FROM—IF THEY DO COM—OH-OH!!—THAT'S IT!!
PARACHUTE TROOPS!!

A clean, concise *Jack Wander* page. It looks like a storyboard for a WWII action movie. Copyright © 1942 K.K. Publications, Inc.

PAUL MURRY

For a good part of his professional life Murry worked anonymously. But since he was drawing one of the best-known cartoon characters on the face of the earth and since his style was distinctive, dedicated fans made it their business to find out who he was. Today, though not quite as renowned as his colleague Carl Burks, Murry has an ever-increasing following. Although he's retired, reprints of his earlier comic book work on Mickey Mouse, as well as other Disney characters, continue to appear.

He was born in Missouri in 1911 and, like many comic book artists, never studied art. He grew up on a farm and stayed there until he was well into his twenties. "Then, in 1937," according to Geoffrey Blum in *Walt Disney's Comics,* "he entered a puzzle contest at a local music store. His artfully decorated entry won first prize—a piano—and the attention of an engraver from St. Joseph, who gave the young farmer a job drawing advertisements. Seven months later, Murry answered a newspaper ad from the Disney Studio. On the strength of his sample drawings, he was offered a tryout. Selling the piano financed a trip to Hollywood, the studio hired him, and his career with Disney was launched."

From the late 1930s into the early 1940s Murry worked as an animator at the Disney shop, on such feature films as *Fantasia, Saludos Amigos,* and *Dumbo.* Gradually he gravitated over to the comic strip department, where the likes of Floyd Gottfredson and Al Taliafero were, respectively, turning out the *Mickey Mouse* and *Donald Duck* newspaper strips. During the Second World War, Roosevelt's "good neighbor policy" stressed strong ties and mutual interests with Latin America. The Disney organization produced both *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* to aid the cause. José Carioca, the dapper Brazilian parrot, and Panchito, the flamboyant Mexican rooster, graduated out of these movies to take turns starring in newspaper Sunday pages of their own. Murry was given the job of drawing the features. He also took a turn penciling the *Uncle Remus* Sunday strip, inked by the late Dick Moores, in the interval between dropping his own *Jim Hardy* strip and going to work on *Gasoline Alley.* In 1946 Murry broke into comic books by drawing the first issue of *Uncle Remus* for Dell's Four Color series.

Murry left the studio in the late 1940s and relocated in Oregon. He must be one of the few men to work at the same time as a lumberjack and as a freelance cartoonist. Before going on to become one of the premier mouse artists in the country, Murry specialized in hillbillies. A recurring locale in his work was the larger and lazier-than-life hillbilly country also favored by the likes of Al Capp, Fred Lasswell, and *Esquire*'s Paul Webb. Murry also turned out gag panels and was a frequent contributor to such cartoon magazines as the aptly named *Gags.*

Back in California at the end of the 1940s, Murry was hired by Western, which produced and printed the Disney comic books for Dell. He took some time out in the early 1950s and, with veteran animator Dick Huemer as writer, drew a comic strip entitled *Buck O'Rue.* Buck was a heroic cowboy—or, rather, a burlesque of a heroic cowboy—and a wanted poster described him as an "impossibly handsome young man." His blonde sweetheart was named 'Dorable and the recurrent bad guy was Trigger Mortis. The strip had the look of a high-class animated cartoon and read like a surrogate *Li'l Abner.* It lasted two years.

After the demise of *Buck O'Rue,* Murry returned to comic books full time. He stuck with them for the next three decades, and as Blum puts it, "He can claim the distinction of having drawn the most Mickey Mouse stories." Murry first drew the famous rodent in 1950 and by 1954 was doing the regular Mickey story in *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* every month. These were humorous adventure tales, usually continued from issue to issue, which gave Murry the chance to draw Mickey and his sidekick Goofy in a wide variety of settings, from steamy jungles to frozen Arctic wastes to haunted castles. Murry developed an appealing and recognizable Mickey of his own, one that was not the mouse of the movies or even of Gottfredson's strip. In addition to Mickey Mouse, Murry drew such characters as Pluto and Super Goof, a superhero parody starring Goofy.

Murry stayed with Mickey until Western closed up shop in 1984. He's retired, living in Southern California, and doing a little farming. He has no interest in returning to comics.

WELL, FOR EXAMPLE, LAST WEEK A BIG SNOWBALL ROLLED DOWN THE HILL AND ONTO THE SKATING RINK! FROSTY CLIMBED UP TO WHERE IT STARTED FROM AND FOUND NO SIGN OF FOOTPRINTS!
COULD BE JUST A PRANK!
OR JUST A JOKE!
MAYBE! FROSTY IS WORRIED, BECAUSE IN TWO WEEKS HIS RESORT HAS ITS GRAND OPENING WITH A BIG WINTER SPORTS CARNIVAL! HE WOULDN'T WANT PEOPLE TO BE SCARED AWAY!
OKAY! WE'LL GO UP AND HAVE A LOOK AROUND!
LATER...
THERE IT IS! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SPOT!
GAWRSH! LOOKUT THUH SKI JUMP AN' EVERYTHING!
THE FIRST THING WE'LL HAVE TO DETERMINE IS WHY SHOULD ANYONE TRY TO SCARE PEOPLE AWAY! MAYBE THERE'S ANOTHER RESORT NEARBY WHICH DOESN'T WANT COMPETITION!
OR MAYBE THERE'S GOLD BURIED HERE OR SOMETHIN'!
MAYBE. BUT I'M SURE FROSTY WOULD KNOW WHETHER OR NOT THERE'S GOLD OR ANY OTHER MINERALS AROUND HERE!
YEAH, I GUESS SO!
GUEST PARKING
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE THE ONLY ONES...
HEY, THERE! LOOKING FOR ME?
OMIGOSH!
GAWRSH! A TALKING SNOWMAN!
YOU MUST BE MICKEY AND GOOFY!

Mickey and Goofy on the trail of adventure. Copyright © 1987 The Walt Disney Company.

BOB OKSNER

Among the most successful portrayers of pretty women in comics, Oksner has devoted a good portion of his professional life to drawing all sorts of them—from Supergirl to Lucille Ball.

He hadn't intended to become a cartoonist at all. Born in 1916, he'd been studying at NYU for a legal career when he met magazine illustrator Arthur William Brown. Brown encouraged him to develop what up to that time had been a casual interest in art and drawing. Oksner switched to the Art Students League and after that to Columbia. He was still going for his MA and planning to become an art teacher when he broke into comic books in 1939.

His first job was with Lloyd Jacquet's Funnies, Inc. Jacquet, whom Oksner remembers as being "very well dressed and quite a gentleman," was supplying the artwork for the Marvel titles. Oksner went to Jacquet's shop in hopes of earning some money to help put him through his final college year.

His initial work appeared in *Marvel Mystery Comics,* for which he drew *Terry Vance,* an adventure feature starring a teenage lad billed as the School Boy Sleuth. For *Captain America Comics* in the early 1940s, he illustrated the exploits of one of the few costumed crimefighters who went about his chores riding a bicycle. This was another teenager—a young man who called himself the Secret Stamp (after U.S. War Stamps, which patriotic kids were being encouraged to purchase during World War II). While with Marvel, Oksner took a turn drawing one of Stan Lee's earliest superheroes, a Nazi fighter known as the Destroyer.

In 1943 Oksner joined the B. W. Sangor shop. It was packaging material for such comics as *Startling, Thrilling, Real Life,* and *Mystery,* as well as titles for what eventually became the American Comics Group. His style had been changing over the years, from sedate and conventional to much looser and more inventive. He had also changed the way he drew women and begun to develop his own distinctive style. Among the features he turned out at the Sangor shop were *Commando Cubs, Lance Lewis, Miss Masque,* and *Brad Spencer, Wonderman.*

In 1945 Oksner got the urge to do an adventure strip. What he had in mind was something with a Joel McCrea–type foreign correspondent as the hero. He named his leading man Cairo Jones, and when he had sufficient samples, he took them around to the Associated Newspapers syndicate. Tarpe Mills's sexy Sunday page, *Miss Fury,* was doing well for the parent syndicate, and it was decided that another Miss ought to do equally well. The strip, featuring an attractive, trouble-prone blonde named Miss Cairo Jones, ran for two years.

Through his friend and colleague Irwin Hasen, Oksner met editor Sheldon Mayer. This resulted in his doing all his comic book work, from the postwar years onward, for DC. He started off with heroes like Hawkman and the Ghost Patrol, but as the comic book field started to change, Oksner branched out. He drew *Leave It to Binky,* a teenage humor book (and one that started in business almost a decade before *Leave It to Beaver* took to the air); *Miss Beverly Hills;* and a lot of other nonadventure stuff. From 1953 to 1955, under the pen name of Bob Lawrence, he also drew the newspaper strip based on *I Love Lucy.* Show-biz spin-offs, particularly ones that included lots of pretty girls in the cast, became one of his specialities. For DC he worked on *Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis,* and *Dobie Gillis,* among others.

Oksner wrote Hasen's newspaper strip *Dondi,* from 1967 until its demise in the 1980s, and on occasion penciled it. He drew one more strip of his own, *Soozi,* that ran in 1967 and 1968. Until recently he was a steady contributor at DC, where he'd worked on such strips as *Supergirl.* These days he's doing very little comic book work.

When asked about how to draw pretty women, Oksner told *Tips from the Top Cartoonists* that the important thing is "the idea I want to convey. Is the young lady going to be coy? Happy? Pensive? Whatever the thought is, the movement and attitude of her entire body should send out the message. So at first, rather than the girl, I sketch the emotion I want to show."

HE DOESN'T ANSWER!... STRANGE -- THERE'S A LIGHT AT THE OTHER END! WHAT SORT OF NEW TRICK...?
SABER!
As Cairo emerges from the Mexican cave...
SEÑORITA! QUE HA PASADO? SABER VON TIGRON ... WHERE EES HE?
YOU'LL FIND HIM INSIDE, GENTLEMEN!
HE'S . DEAD!

Miss Cairo Jones as she looked in her only comic book appearance. Copyright © 1945 Associated Newspapers.

CARL PFEUFER

He was an artist who managed to be both prolific and good. During the 1940s, his most active decade, Pfeufer drew such features as *Sub-Mariner, Mr. Scarlet, Don Winslow, Tom Mix,* and *Commando Yank.* By the time he entered comic books he'd already drawn three nationally, though sparsely, syndicated strips. After he left the field, he returned to the funny papers and turned out several news strips and panels in the 1950s and 1960s. Since a good deal of his comic book work was done anonymously, Pfeufer is not among the best remembered of Golden Age artists.

Born in Mexico City in 1910, he came to New York with his family when he was seven. He was something of a prodigy and attended Cooper Union art school while still in his teens. In the early 1930s he worked as a magazine illustrator, and by the middle of the decade, he was on the art staff of the Brooklyn *Eagle.* Soon after he joined up, the newspaper started its own syndicate and launched several comic strips. Pfeufer was eventually responsible for drawing three of them. The most impressive was *Don Dixon and the Hidden Empire,* a science fiction Sunday page that was intended as Flatbush's answer to *Flash Gordon.* The topper to the page was *Tad of the Tanbark,* which, despite its circus-oriented title, took place mostly in the jungle and managed to look quite a bit like *Jungle Jim.* Shortly afterward Pfeufer took over *Gordon Fife,* a daily strip dealing with action and political intrigue in Europe. His style was roughly similar to that of Alex Raymond, but looser and more casual. His figure work and compositions were always excellent. None of this trio of features survived beyond the early 1940s.

Pfeufer next moved on to illustrating such pulp magazines as *Detective Fiction Weekly* and *Dime Detective.* He broke into comic books in 1942, by way of Lloyd Jacquet's Funnies, Inc. His first major assignment was drawing Sub-Mariner in *Marvel Mystery Comics,* a job he took over when Bill Everett went into the service. During the war years, the aquatic avenger specialized in thwarting fiendish Nazi and Japanese plots, usually ones involving huge intricate mechanisms and machines. Pfeufer rendered all these larger-than-life, sometimes fairly zany events with suitable style and verve.

By the mid-1940s, after turning out a great deal of material for an assortment of publishers—some of it very hurried-looking—Pfeufer had settled down at Fawcett. Abandoning the rushed appearance of that earlier stuff, he did a commendable job on costumed heroes like Commando Yank and Mr. Scarlet in *Wow Comics* and the cleancut navy hero Don Winslow. Westerns began to supplant superheroics in the immediate postwar years, and in that period Pfeufer became a very active cowboy artist. He put considerable life into the sagebrush adventures of such movie cowboys as Hopalong Cassidy, Ken Maynard, and Tom Mix. Sometimes he teamed up with John Jordan as his inker.

In 1952 he took over a comedy-adventure Sunday page called *The Bantam Prince,* staying with it until it folded the following year. He worked off and on in comic books, while also doing newspaper features and book illustration. His last color comic book work was for a shortlived and fairly ridiculous magazine titled *Super Green Beret* in 1967. The artwork was pedestrian; and quite obviously Pfeufer had long since lost the enthusiasm and some of the skill he'd exhibited in the 1940s and early 1950s.

Continuing with commercial art, he branched out into painting and watercolors. He was living in Texas when he died in 1980.

NO SOONER SAID— THAN DONE!
HEY! LOOK AT THAT CRAZY GUY!
AH··· BUT WAIT! BACK IN GERMANY A SECRET FACTORY IS GOING FULL BLAST.
THERE THEY ARE, HERR VON ROEDER!
WONDERBAR! NOW LET'S SEE THOSE THAT ARE BEING TESTED OUTSIDE.
HERE IT IS! NOTICE THE DRIVING POWER— THE STRENGTH!
AMAZING!
WATCH HOW IT WITHSTANDS THE BLAST OF A HEAVY BOMB.
HA-HA! FOR A CERTAINTY, SUB-MARINER IS DOOMED! VICTORY IS OURS!
BOM!
A SHORT WHILE LATER···
THE METAL MEN ARE READY, ADMIRAL— THEY AWAIT YOUR COMMAND!
GOOD! WE START AT ONCE. SUMMON MY PICKED MEN!
AND SO THE METAL MONSTERS BEGIN THEIR ADVANCE.
FORWARD ALL! WE PROCEED ACCORDING TO PLAN 2!
TIME PASSES SWIFTLY··· MILES GO UNDER THE GIANTS' ENORMOUS STRIDES. THEN···
LOOK-AHEAD! A BOY! MUST BE ONE OF SUB-MARINER'S RACE!
GRAB HIM! THEN WE CAN LEARN THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE CITY!
3

The Pfeufer version of Prince Namor, helping to win the Second World War.

Copyright © 1943 Timely Comics, Inc.

FRED RAY

He's best remembered for the two decades he devoted to drawing DC's *Tomahawk.* But Ray had already been in comics several years when he took over that buckskin-clad hero, and in the early 1940s he did some of the best straight adventure stuff in comic books. He also did a very impressive job ghosting Superman and drew one of the most memorable Golden Age covers.

Frederic E. Ray, who usually signed himself FRay, was born in Pennsylvania in 1922. He always had an interest in history as well as comics; and his major influences growing up were illustrators Howard Pyle, N. C. Wyeth, and Frederic Remington, as well as cartoonists Hal Foster and, most important, Noel Sickles. He was impressed, too, by a nonfiction newspaper strip called *Highlights of History* by an artist named J. Carroll Mansfield. In 1940, he recalls, he "took a portfolio to New York and was hired my first day there by Whitney Ellsworth at Detective Comics, Inc." He was paid a salary of $35 a week.

Ray broke into print with spot illustrations for the two-page text stories that were required in comic books in those days. His first regular assignment was on *Radio Squad,* which he began drawing in *More Fun* #62 (December 1940)—where the stars were the Spectre and Dr. Fate. This urban cop drama had been created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster; and several other artists, including Chad, had filled in after Shuster began devoting all his time to Superman. Ray's work was a bit stiff initially, though fairly assured for a teenager just starting out. Over the next year he got increasingly good, especially in staging the stories and in applying the lush inking technique of his idol Noel Sickles. Ray also worked briefly on another backup feature, *Sergeant O'Malley of the Red Coat Patrol.* This outdoor saga gave him a chance to display his knack for drawing animals and for getting all the details of uniforms and costumes right.

Ray began an association with Superman soon after joining DC. He drew covers for both *Action Comics* and *Superman.* His cover for *Action* #52 (September 1942), showing Superman and the magazine's other major characters running side by side toward the reader, was one of his most striking and has been reprinted in various places. Ray also provided the dozen illustrations for Superman's Super-Contest in three 1941 issues of *Action.* The reader who came up with the best titles for the twelve card-sized pictures won $100–$200 if the winner was a member of the Superman of America club. Around the same time, Ray did the artwork for the cards that accompanied packages of Superman Gum, a product of Gum, Inc. There were seventy-two full-color cards, which are still sought by collectors.

It was for *Action* that Ray drew and wrote his best Golden Age feature—*Congo Bill.* This *Jungle Jim* simulacrum had originally been created for *More Fun Comics* by George Papp. Bill moved into *Action* in #37 (June 1941), with Ray drawing and writing his adventures and getting his first prominent credit. This was an assignment he obviously enjoyed, and he put considerable effort into it. It was on *Congo Bill* that he developed a strong, mature style. Gradually the feature changed, its looks improved, and its stories moved away from lost cities and evil hunters to take notice of the Second World War. The 1942 stories are especially fine: inventively staged and filled with accurately drawn planes, weapons, and uniforms. Ray avoided heroic poses, favoring natural figures. He'd assimilated a good deal of technique by studying the work of Noel Sickles on the *Scorchy Smith* newspaper strip and his jungle scenes were very good. All of this added a sophistication that was missing from the work of many of his contemporaries—with the exception of Mort Meskin, Will Eisner, and a few others.

Ray got away from traditional splash panels, too, and his opening scenes are illustrations rather than teasers for action to come. His last *Congo Bill* story before he entered the service was in *Action* #51 (August 1942), and in that splash five Flying Tiger pilots are simply facing the reader and introducing themselves.

Ray was in the Army for four years. After that he went back home, and taking advantage of the GI Bill, studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He did a few more *Congo Bill* stories and then took over *Tomahawk* in *Star-Spangled Comics.* The character, which allowed Ray to indulge his interest in history, got his own magazine in 1950. "in Ray, Tomahawk found his ideal illustrator," comics critic and historian R. C. Harvey has said. "Through careful research Ray brought absolute authenticity to his rendering of colonial America."

Ray left comics in the early 1970s, mostly because he felt "my style and subject matter were dated and no longer called for." He worked for Historical Times, Inc., publisher of magazines devoted to history, and also published a series of booklets on his own depicting such battles as Gettysburg, the Alamo, and Valley Forge.

NEXT DAY ON THE DOCK AT FREETOWN—
BUT, BILL, PROFESSOR KENT AND I THOUGHT..
NO, SHEILA, I CANT COME ALONG. ID BOG DOWN IN CIVILIZATION. AFRICA IS MY HOME—IT'S IN MY BLOOD. I MUST STAY HERE.
WELL, THERE THEY GO — BON VOYAGE —
BEG PARDON, SIR, BUT ARE YOU CONGO BILL?
THAT'S RIGHT
MAJOR JOYCE WISHES TO SEE YOU AT HEADQUARTERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
IN THE OFFICE OF MAJOR JOYCE...
... AND THAT'S THE LAYOUT, BILL. SOMEWHERE BETWEEN HERE AND CAIRO, THESE AMERICAN PLANES HAVE JUST BEEN VANISHING AS IF INTO THIN AIR!
WELL, WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST I DO ABOUT IT, SIR?
FIND THOSE PLANES! USE YOUR OWN METHODS — BUT FIND THOSE PLANES!
LISTEN — HERE'S A PLAN...
THAT NIGHT AT THE AIRFIELD BILL TALKS TO VETERAN PILOT, DICK McCARTHY...
MAJOR JOYCE'S ORDERS, McCARTHY. I'M PINCH-HITTING FOR YOU TONIGHT.
RIGHT—I'LL SEE YOU IN CAIRO. GOOD LUCK!
2
CHANGING INTO HIS PILOT'S TOGS, BILL CLIMBS IN TO A WAITING PLANE AND ROARS OFF INTO THE NIGHT — CAIRO-BOUND!
WHILE ON THE EDGE OF THE FIELD, A LONE FIGURE WATCHES.
H-M-M. COLONEL HETTZ WILL BE GLAD TO HEAR THAT ANOTHER PLANE IS ON THE WAY!

A wartime *Congo Bill* page, demonstrating Ray's skills. Copyright © 1942 DC Comics, Inc.

PIERCE G. RICE

He was one of the true mystery men of the Golden Age. A prolific penciler, Rice drew such characters as the Black Cat, Steel Sterling, the Shield, and the Green Hornet. But with one or two exceptions, he never signed his stuff. So, although his work appeared in comic books published by DC, Harvey, Marvel, and Fox, he managed to remain anonymous the whole time. His approach to drawing and staging the boisterous action required in superhero stories was highly innovative and impressive. He influenced several younger artists, some of whom didn't even know his name at the time.

Rice was born in Brooklyn in 1916 and studied at the National Academy of Design in Manhattan. His chief ambition was to be an illustrator or a painter. He got into comics by answering a newspaper ad placed by the Eisner-Iger shop. Speaking of those early days, Rice has said, "Everybody in the business aspired to something else. . . . everybody thought, 'In a year I'll be doing something else.' " He stayed in comics, with time out for military service during World War II, for well over a decade.

While working at the shop, Rice met an Argentina-born artist named Arturo Cazeneuve. Cazeneuve's brother Louis was doing work for the Fox line of comic books, and within a few months the brothers had teamed up to produce artwork for Fox and several other publishers. Eventually they set up a studio on Lexington Avenue. The Cazeneuves did the inking, Rice did most of the penciling. Inking to him, at the time, seemed a chore and not much more interesting than lettering. So he concentrated on penciling and was able to turn out several pages a day. His strong suits were the figure in action and composition. "I can make pictures," he says, "and a lot of artists can't." As he recalls, he was paid $2 a page when he started out in 1939 and by the early 1940s was averaging $9.

When asked why he never signed his stuff, Rice replies that he has the impression that few cartoonists did back then. Although this was actually not the case at many of the magazines he worked for, Rice maintains that he was not consciously trying to be anonymous. Whatever his reasons, he was virtually unknown outside the business during his active years in it. Only research by historians like Jerry Bails eventually identified him.

The Cazeneuves's studio was responsible for a great deal of material that appeared in Victor S. Fox's line of comic books in the early 1940s, most of it penciled by Rice. For such titles as *Mystery Men Comics, Fantastic Comics,* and *Wonderworld Comics,* there were Samson, the Blue Beetle, the Flame, and dozens of other characters. Rice was sometimes responsible for penciling almost entire issues; yet, in his three-year association with the company, he never met the enterprising Fox.

Another important Cazeneuves client was the Harvey brothers. For the Harvey books—*Speed Comics, Champ Comics,* and others—the team drew Captain Freedom, Shock Gibson, the Green Hornet, the Zebra, and the Black Cat. Rice did an especially good job with this latter character, a sparsely clad female crimefighter. He penciled action splash pages that came close to rivaling those of Jack Kirby and Joe Simon. Like Kirby, Rice had developed a storytelling technique that involved having the figures spill out of panels. Anatomy was an area where he excelled, and he was flattered to see many of the poses he'd created turning up in the work of his contemporaries. One of Rice's trademarks was the bent elbow. He was fond of placing a figure at the left of the panel, arm bent and serving as a sort of arrow leading the eye into the action.

Rice and his associates worked for Detective Comics, Inc., too. He did some issues of *Leading Comics,* which featured the *Seven Soldiers of Victory,* DC's roadshow version of the *Justice Society.* That meant he got to draw the Vigilante, the Crimson Avenger, the Green Arrow, and several other second bananas.

Rice is especially fond of the work he did for MLJ's *Pep Comics* and *Zip Comics.* He'd known Irv Novick since art school, and for several months in the early 1940s, he penciled both *The Shield* and *Steel Sterling* for Novick. Novick inked and took sole credit, but the stories show most of the Rice characteristics—accurate figure work, action that leaps across the page, odd angle shots, and bent elbows.

Rice went into the service in 1943. He returned to comic books after the war, penciling Western, crime, and horror for Marvel and also working for several other outfits. By the early 1950s the business was growing "pretty lethargic" and he left it to explore other aspects of art. For a while he even worked for a company that was producing paint-by-the-numbers kits. He went on to illustration and put in a couple of hitches doing drawings for the government. He believes that "design is all inclusive" and has applied his knowledge to all sorts of other areas, including the designing of medallions. Rice is still active as an artist and he also teaches in Manhattan. He has no intention of retiring.

SWINGING RECKLESSLY FROM ROOF TO ROOF SHE RACES ACROSS THE CITY!....
...AND DROPS LIKE A PLUMMET INTO THE BACK ROOM OF THE LITTLE STATIONERY STORE...
NOW TO GET A LITTLE INFORMATION!...BUT NOT BY BEING "FLUFFY", I THINK!
THERE! THIS RACKET OUGHT TO BRING THAT BIG GORILLA AT THE COUNTER, BACK HERE!
CRASH!
BANG!
THE VICTIM FALLS INTO THE TRAP!
HEY, WHAT GOES ON HERE? WHY, I'LL---!
YOU'LL GIVE ME SOME INFORMATION, MY SWEET...OR ELSE!
THE-THE SPIDER QUEEN! LET ME GO... I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING!
THE TERRIFIED GANGSTER SPILLS HIS STORY...
THEY WERE AFRAID SOMEONE HEARD THE OLD GUY HOLLER, SO THEY TOOK HIM TO THE LAKE TO WORK ON HIM! I'LL TELL YOU WHERE...
I GOTTA GO! THEY MIGHT BE DROWNING THE POOR GUY RIGHT NOW...!
...AND SHANNON SPEEDS BACK TO HER APARTMENT WHERE MIKE IS WAITING...
HOME AGAIN! ..AND WITH PLENTY OF DIRT TO DISH, WHAT'S MORE...!
MAKING A HASTY CHANGE, SHANNON REAPPEARS....
...SO THAT'S WHERE THEY TOOK HIM! IT'S ON A LAKE...
A LAKE? HOLY SMOKE!
5

Anatomy and action, two of Rice's strong suits. Copyright © 1942 Fox Comics, Inc.

FRANK ROBBINS

An extremely gifted artist, Robbins was often misunderstood or undervalued during his long career in comic strips and comic books. Some strip historians have tended to dismiss his innovative work on *Scorchy Smith* and *Johnny Hazard* as nothing more than a Caniff impersonation; and when, in the 1970s, he drew such comic book perennials as Batman and Captain America, the more traditionally minded fans howled and protested that he wasn't working in the accepted Jack Kirby–Carmine Infantino manner.

Robbins, born in 1917 in Boston, was something of an artistic boy wonder and helped win the family bread from his early teens. Though he wanted to be a serious painter like his friend and contemporary Jack Levine, from the time his family moved to New York City in the early years of the Depression, Robbins had to concentrate on the commercial side of art. He worked on the murals for Radio City Music Hall, did promotional art for RKO Pictures, and served a stretch in Bert Whitman's comic book shop. Through a freelance scriptwriter named Bob Farrell, he learned that the Associated Press was looking for an artist to take over its *Scorchy Smith* newspaper strip. Scorchy was a daredevil pilot, modeled after Lindbergh, and had first hit the funny papers in 1930. During the mid-1930s Noel Sickles, Caniff's talented friend and mentor, had turned the strip into the best-looking adventure strip going. With Farrell's help on scripting, Robbins prepared a week's samples. The samples impressed the AP, as did, no doubt, the fact that Robbins was young and would work cheap. He got the job, and his first daily appeared on May 22, 1939. Farrell stayed on as writer for eight months and thereafter Robbins took over the production of the whole package.

Although he's sometimes characterized as just one more disciple of the Sickles–Caniff School, Frank Robbins was never actually that. He arrived at his highly individual, impressionist style by his own route, guided more by his own sensibilities than by a desire to emulate others. The early continuities didn't exactly lend themselves to the slick movie-realism style Robbins was working toward, but by the time Scorchy got into the air force in 1942, Robbins had everything under control. In his book *The Comics,* Coulton Waugh, himself a longtime AP artist, said this about one of Robbins's impressive wartime sequences: "Robbins's Russia has a formidable reality; it creates the sense of deep snows; it is full of bitter, bloody struggle."

Early in 1944 Hearst's King Features contacted Robbins and discussions resulted in his creating a new adventure strip. In its first years *Johnny Hazard* was a virtual twin of *Scorchy Smith.* Robbins had a very strong design sense, and his wartime black-and-white strips are impressive. His approach to storytelling had a strong influence on such younger artists as Alex Toth.

At about the same time he was starting on *Scorchy Smith,* Robbins also drew *Lightnin' and the Lone Rider,* a thinly syndicated cowboy strip that Farrell was involved with. This poor man's Lone Ranger had been drawn originally by Jack Kirby and it was reprinted for a time in *Famous Funnies,* marking the earliest appearance of Robbins's stuff in a comic book. In the early and mid-1940s Robbins, who was always very fast, added magazine illustration and advertising strips to his workload. He did illustrations for *Life* and could be found in the Sunday funnies doing soap opera–style strips for products like Dr. Lyons' Tooth Powder. He also drew *Volto from Mars,* a one-page ad series that appeared in most of the DC and Fawcett titles in the mid-1940s. Volto was an alien superhero who'd come to Earth to fight crime and extol the virtues of Grape-Nuts Flakes. He had exceptional magnetic powers, his left hand repelling and his right hand attracting. He also had an open-faced boy sidekick who said things like, "No kiddin', fellows! GRAPE-NUTS FLAKES is really out of this world! They're sweet-as-a-nut and sizzling with Volto energy! TRY 'EM!"

By the early 1970s the newspaper adventure strip was not faring as well as it once had. *Johnny Hazard* was holding on but not bringing in the income it once had. Robbins turned to comic books. He began writing for DC in the late 1960s, on such features as the *Flash, Superboy,* and *Batman,* and then started drawing *Batman* and the *Shadow.* His style was looser now, and he went in for a very bold, choppy inking and a great deal of black. Although Robbins seemed to be trying for conventional flamboyant comic book layouts, his pages looked like nothing else that was being done in comic books. When his *Batman* stories began appearing in *Detective Comics* in autumn of 1971, he elicited a mixed response—"Either a rhapsodic yes or a discordant no," as editor Julie Schwartz put it. Robbins didn't stay long with the caped crusader or with the mysterious Shadow. He did some science fiction and horror stories for DC and even a little work for *Plop!*

At DC he'd penciled, inked, sometimes lettered. In many cases, he also wrote the scripts. When he started doing jobs for Marvel in 1975 he penciled only and labored on *Captain America, The Invaders,* and *Ghost Rider.* His stay there was not especially long. *Johnny Hazard,* one of the last of the true adventure strips, breathed its last in the late 1970s. When last heard of, Robbins was living in Mexico and, at long last, painting full time.

VOLTO
FROM MARS
THIS'LL TEACH YOU TO BUST UP MY RACKETS, MR. REFORM MAYOR!
DUCK! HE THREW A BOMB!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DUCK - REMEMBER MY MAGNETIC POWERS!
WHEN I SAY VOLTO, MY LEFT HAND REPELS...
AMAZING!
VOLTO
BUT THE GANGSTER'S GETTING AWAY, VOLTO!
DON'T FORGET MY MAGNETIC RIGHT HAND ATTRACTS...
INCREDIBLE! YOU SAVED MY LIFE! HOW DO YOU DO IT?
IT'S SIMPLE, MR. MAYOR! VOLTO'S FROM MARS, WHERE EVERYONE HAS MAGNETIC POWER!
AND THEY RECHARGE THAT MAGNETISM BY EATING CEREAL GRAINS DAILY!
WELL, IN THAT CASE, COME ON INSIDE AND HAVE SOME GRAPE-NUTS FLAKES! THEY'RE THE SWELLEST-TASTING CEREAL IN TOWN!
THEY MUST BE!! EVERYONE ON EARTH SEEMS TO EAT THEM!
GRAPE-NUTS FLAKES MAY NOT GIVE YOU VOLTO'S MAGNETIC POWER, BUT IT SURE WILL GIVE YOU THAT "UP AND AT 'EM" FEELING IN THE MORNING! GET GRAPE-NUTS FLAKES TODAY, YOU'LL SAY THEY TASTE SWELL!
Grape-Nuts Flakes
WHOLE-GRAIN

Robbins' first superhero, showing the benefits of proper nutrition. Copyright © 1944 General Foods Corp.

BOODY ROGERS

Gordon "Boody" Rogers worked on comic books before the Golden Age had even begun. He helped draw one of the most successful adventure strips of the 1930s and 1940s and created a character who deserves a place in the front ranks of those who practice the noble profession of mock heroics in newspaper strips and comic books.

Rogers was born in 1904 in the Oklahoma Territory and reared in Texas. "I first thought of being a cartoonist as soon as I was big enough to hold a pencil," he recalls. "The first laugh at my work, that I can remember, was when I was in the first grade in Electra, Texas. The teacher sent some of us to the blackboard to add two and two or something, but instead I drew a guy sitting on a barbed-wire fence. All the kids laughed—the teacher didn't think it was funny and chewed my rear down to the size of a grape." Undaunted, he kept at his cartooning. His work first saw print in his high school yearbook. He was art editor of the University of Arizona *Kitty Kat,* and some of his cartoons from there were reprinted in *College Humor.*

The late 1920s found him in Chicago, studying at the Academy of Fine Arts. It was there that he first met fellow Oklahoman Zack Mosley. "I went to New York in 1928," he says. "My first artwork was tracing my feet on cardboard and cutting them out and placing them in my shoes to plug the holes. I started selling a few cartoons to *Life, Judge, Collier's, Film Fun,* and anyone who would buy. Then came *The Funnies . . .*"

Boody Rogers was a comic book pioneer. He worked on both George Delacorte's *The Funnies* and Major Nicholson's *New Comics* in the mid-1930s—the venturesome and low-paying publications that served as the foundation for the entire comic book industry. For the relatively shortlived Dell tabloid he drew *Deadwood Gulch, Rock Age Roy, Sancho and the Don,* and *Campus Clowns.* For Nicholson he did similar stuff. During the late 1920s and mid-1930s, he also turned out a complete book of *Deadwood Gulch* for Dell, ghosted Frank Beck's *Gas Buggies* strip, lettered *Dumb Dora,* did coloring on the *Winnie Winkle* Sunday pages, and did "anything to make ham and eggs."

When the Chicago Tribune–New York News syndicate decided, in 1936, that there ought to be a *Smilin' Jack* daily to go with the Sunday, Zack Mosley asked his old friend to lend a hand. Rogers, working with Mosley in his Long Island studio, was associated with the aviation strip during its heyday. That was in the years when Jack first encountered the likes of Downwind, Fat Stuff, and the Head; first grew his Gable-like moustache; and began his interrupted marches to the altar with various de-icers.

During his tenure with Mosley, Rogers got the urge to draw a strip of his own. He sold *Sparky Watts,* which took a comedy approach to the notion of a superhero, to the Frank Jay Markey Syndicate. *Sparky Watts,* a daily, made its initial appearance in spring 1940 in roughly forty newspapers around the country. At the time Sparky's sole competition on the comic pages was Superman himself.

When we first meet Sparky he's working his way through college by selling magazine subscriptions. Exposure to a cosmic ray machine turns him into the strongest man on Earth. The regulars in the strip included Doc Static, inventor of the cosmic ray machine that transformed Sparky (the machine looked suspiciously like an old box camera with a light bulb screwed on top, but the darn thing obviously worked); Slap Happy, an ex-pug whose feet became immense after an accidental cosmic ray treatment; and Yoo Hoo, a Chinese war orphan who came to share the ménage. There were also abundant examples of ladies who usually exceeded the Mosley specifications in the bosom department. Rogers was drafted soon after America entered World War II and the strip ended in the spring of 1942.

Back in 1941, however, *Big Shot Comics* (owned in part by Markey) had begun reprinting the strips in four- and six-page chunks. After the war, Rogers resumed drawing Sparky's adventures, turning out twenty-seven new six-page episodes for *Big Shot* and six original-material issues of Sparky's own magazine. The hero's postwar career was even more flamboyant than the one he'd had in the newspapers, involving him with Amazons, giant bugs, reanimated mummies, crazed inventors, and a nuclear holocaust. Rogers took none of these problems seriously.

Both *Big Shot* and the *Sparky Watts* magazine folded in 1949. But Boody Rogers was not quite through with comic books. A year earlier he'd started doing *Babe* for the folks who published *Prize Comics.* The beautiful Babe, aka the Darling of the Hills, had most of her adventures in a world that mixed hillbilly elements and fantasy. She was also a crackerjack baseball player. Her magazine expired in spring 1950. Rogers also wrote and drew three issues of *Dudley.* Although billed as "the Teenage Sensation!" Dudley failed to catch on.

After *Dudley,* Rogers left comic books. For some years he ran an art supply store in Phoenix, Arizona, where he claims he made more money than he ever did drawing. Retired now, he lives in Texas.

BIG SHOT

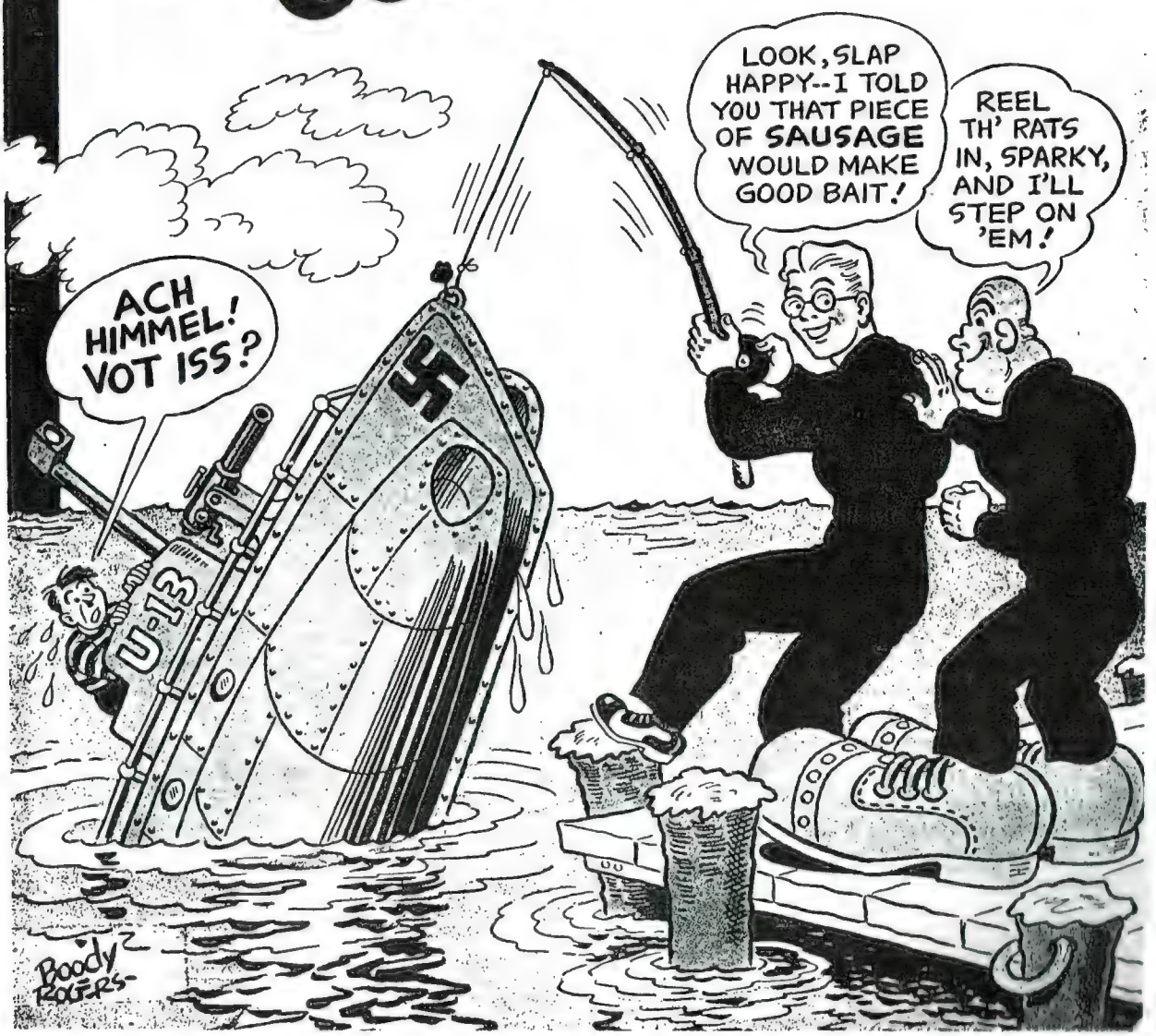
No. 25

JULY, 1942

BIG SHOT Comics

10c

IN THIS ISSUE:
JOE PALOOKA
THE FACE
SPARKY WATTS
CAPTAIN DEVILDOG
THE SKYMAN
SPY-CHIEF
AND MANY OTHER FAVORITES!


ACH HIMMEL! VOT ISS?
U-13
LOOK, SLAP HAPPY--I TOLD YOU THAT PIECE OF SAUSAGE WOULD MAKE GOOD BAIT!
REEL TH' RATS IN, SPARKY, AND I'LL STEP ON 'EM!
Boody Rogers

Sparky does his bit for the war effort. Copyright © 1942 Columbia Comic Corp.

FRED SCHWAB

The cartooning profession, and especially the comic book branch, has always attracted boy wonders—gifted youths who start working while still in their teens. A notable example is Fred Schwab, who sold to just about every Golden Age publisher, major and minor, before he was old enough to vote. After he reached maturity, he drew *Lady Luck,* and by the time he reached his early thirties, he had left comic books for good.

Schwab was born in New York City on August 26, 1920, and in 1936, while still in high school, he got himself a job with the art shop run by the entrepreneur Harry "A" Chesler. Spotting Chesler's want ad for cartoonists in a Sunday *New York Times,* Schwab dashed right over the same day with his samples. As he recalls, Chesler was there all alone in the offices. Puffing on his cigar, he looked over the young man's work, muttered, "Better than Bill Holman," and offered him a job at the handsome—for those Depression years—salary of $30 a week. When Schwab reported for work the next day, he noticed a substantial number of out-of-work artists of various ages—none of whom had figured to find the shop open on Sunday—lining up to see about the job he'd already landed. Schwab thereupon embarked on his career as the most prolific producer of humor fillers during the Golden Age. He usually limited himself to one- and two-page features, though sometimes he'd wax ambitious and turn out a four-pager. Leaving Chesler in 1938, he eventually wound up doing work for both Funnies, Inc. and the Eisner-Iger shop. In between times Schwab called on outfits like DC, who were not keen on dealing with shops, and sold to them directly.

Since the comic book business was just starting up when he got into it, Schwab had to look elsewhere for influences. He's said the two cartoonists he admired most were to be found in the newspaper comic sections. They were Milt Gross, an uninhibited and zany gentleman best known for *Nize Baby, Count Screwloose,* and *Dave's Delicatessen;* and Billy DeBeck, creator of both Barney Google and Snuffy Smith. Schwab's work, though, doesn't show their influence directly—there aren't any stylistic similarities, but spiritual affinities are certainly evident. Schwab also displays a fondness for the exaggerated anatomy and perspective to be found in the then-flourishing animated cartoon field.

His pages are lively, filled with energy. And, like the best of the funny cartoonists, Schwab had the ability to draw everything his own way—people, animals, buildings, furniture, machines—each and every prop and backdrop of his particular version of the world. Everything is rendered in his highly personal style. The stuff always looks funny, even when one of the gags may not be entirely first rate.

During the years when his pages were showing up everywhere, Schwab picked up fans within the business. A particular admirer is Gil Kane, who has been known to startle comic-convention-panel audiences by launching into a discourse on Schwab's work in the middle of a discussion of superheroes and calling him one of the most gifted of the Golden Age artists. British comics historian Denis Gifford is another enthusiastic champion of Schwab; in his *International Book of Comics,* a history of comic magazines from the last century to the present, he calls Schwab a "zany stylist" and mentions him more often than many of his contemporaries.

Schwab drew everything from funny animals such as *Mortimer the Monk* in *Big Shot Comics* to Western sagas like *Cal an' Alec* in *More Fun.* He turned out historical pages like *Don Coyote* in *Adventure Comics,* sports pages like *Slug-nutty Sam* in *Fight Comics,* and science fiction like *Professor Fiend* in *Fantastic Comics.* His detective burlesque *Hemlock Shomes* ran in *Mystery Men Comics.* Schwab frequently didn't sign his work or used such pennames as Fred Ricks or Fist E. Cuffs. When one of his Shomes stories was reprinted in *Sherlock Holmes in America* a few years ago, it was credited to somebody else. Things like that don't bother him.

He also drew a few halfway serious features—*Dickie Dean* in *Silver Streak Comics* and later *Lady Luck* in the weekly *Spirit* booklet. Schwab left comics in the late 1940s and took a job with the art department of the *New York Times.* He's done an occasional book of humor over the years and still submits spot drawings to such publications as the *Comics Buyer's Guide.* Retired, he lives in Manhattan and frequently attends local comics conventions. He can often be spotted standing to one side with his sketchbook in hand.

AH! — MY ROCKET SHIP IS COMPLETE! NOW TO AIM IT AT MARS, AND BLOOY! I'M OFF!!
POST NO BILLS
THERE'S A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION, AND THE PROF. IS OFF TO MARS, LEAVING BEHIND HIM ONLY A CLOUD OF SMOKE!
UGH?
NO HITCH-HIKERS, HANDSOME!
DARN THE MILKY-WAY! — I DIDN'T ORDER ALL THIS MILK!
AT LAST THE PROF MAKES A GENTLE LANDING ON WHAT HE HOPES IS MARS
CRASH!
HE CRAWLS OUT OF HIS SHIP, AND EXPLORES THE PLACE.
?
FREE ICE CREAM & CANDY!
FREE MOVIES!
NO ADULTS ALLOWED
FREE TOYS
WOW!! THIS PLANET IS INHABITED!!
GIT A LOAD OF THE GUY THAT GOT OUT OF DAT ROCKET SHIP!!
AW — IT'S JUST AN OLD BUZZARD! LET'S TOSS HIM BACK!
FREE CIRCUS TO-DAY!!
OLD BUZZARD, EH? BRACE YOURSELF FOR A SPANKING!
LAY OFF! I'LL HANDLE THE POOR SAP!!
GR-R!

A typical page from the boyhood of Fred Schwab. Copyright © 1939 Fox Features Syndicate.

HOWARD SHERMAN

Sherman spent nearly a quarter of a century in comic books, entering it as the Golden Age was commencing and leaving while the Silver Age was under way. He drew Western, science fiction, humor, and crime stories. But he's best remembered for creating, along with writer Gardner Fox, one of the more durable superheroes—Doctor Fate.

Sherman was born in 1909 and graduated from the Pratt Institute in New York City in 1931. "The Great Depression was in progress," he's recalled. "It was most difficult to find art work for money in those days." Pulp magazines managed to flourish during the hard times of the early 1930s, and eventually Sherman managed to get work providing black-and-white illustrations for Western and detective titles. "Then I got some work for Jack Schiff, who was an editor at Ned Pines, doing illustrations and oil paintings for the pulps." Late in 1939 the Pines outfit decided to branch out into the burgeoning comic book field. Since they were publishing such successful pulps as *Thrilling Detective, Thrilling Western,* and *Thrilling Mystery,* it must've seemed logical to christen their new funny book *Thrilling Comics.* Cover dated February 1940, it offered a mix of characters that were mostly comic book versions of established Pines pulp stars—*The Rio Kid, The Lone Eagle, The Ghost,* and others. But the lead character was a reasonable facsimile of rival Street & Smith's pulp hero Doc Savage. He was named Doc Strange and was the closest thing to a superhero the new magazine had.

"They asked me to come up with an idea for a strip, which I did," Sherman has said. "It was called *The Three Comrades."* The trio consisted of Lucky, Cal, and Books, roving soldiers of fortune whose stories were a mix of adventure and science fiction. "I wrote it, lettered it, drew it, and colored it. I think I received ten dollars per page." Although he lists Milton Caniff and Frank Robbins as his major influences, Sherman's work shows few traces—especially in its earliest phase—of the lushly inked style of these two realistic adventure strip artists. His pages have a clean, open look and an appealing posterlike quality. At the same time, there's a quirkiness to the layouts and angle shots that adds a fantasy feel to *The Three Comrades.* This look would come in especially handy on Sherman's next assignment.

After a few months with the *Thrilling* folks, "I heard that DC Comics was looking for people, so I contacted Whit Ellsworth, who was the head editor at the time. He gave me the script for *Dr. Fate* to start with, at twelve dollars a page." The assignment began a long and exclusive association with DC.

Doctor Fate made his debut in *More Fun* #55 (May 1940) and was a very mysterious and mystical character in his earliest adventures. He was initially a cross between a superhero and an occult detective, a sort of costumed ghostbuster. Sherman designed him a distinctive blue and gold outfit and a metal helmet that completely covered his face. The good doctor resided "apart from mankind in his lonely tower north of ghost-ridden Salem" and called "upon secret and ancient sources for the power with which he fights unusual crimes." Unusual, indeed—in his first year on duty, Doctor Fate bested ancient Mayan gods, combated globemen from outer space, defeated horrors summoned from the cosmic void, and counseled a young woman who suspected she might be a were-leopard. In one encounter with his recurrent enemy, Wotan the Wizard, he went first to Hell for a chat with the skeletal boatman on the River Styx and then up for a chat with God, who was depicted as a blinding light. Sherman illustrated all these grim, occult adventures with great verve and style. He was especially good at the bleak New England landscapes that some of the tales called for; and no slouch at depicting Heaven, Hell, and various unsettling locations in between.

Sherman took over *Slam Bradley* in *Detective Comics* in 1940, too. This strip was a less than serious detective story, originally created by the team of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. After the Second World War Sherman, whose style had moved somewhat closer to realism, pretty much concentrated on more down-to-earth features, *Doctor Fate* having gone on hiatus in 1944. For DC's *Gang Busters* he drew some impressive true crime material, and he was also to be found in *Real Fact* doing historical and current events material. His editor on these magazines was Jack Schiff, who'd come over to DC in the early 1940s.

DC's *Western Comics* came along in 1948, with Sherman's *Wyoming Kid* as the star. Sherman, who'd done a great many attractive covers for *More Fun,* now contributed covers to *Western.* When *Strange Adventures,* DC's first all-out science fiction title, appeared in 1950, Sherman was there illustrating Edmond Hamilton's *Kris KL-99.* He remained in comics until the early 1960s and then moved on to commercial art, where one of his specialties was package design.

Retired now, Sherman lives in New Jersey. When asked in 1985 to provide some anecdotes about his editors, Sherman answered, "I have no stories to tell about my contact with editors. It seemed to be strictly business with them. . . . I worked for them until 1963, when they became disenchanted with me and I with them."

BANG!
HELP!
WE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER. THIS IS THE END OF THE CAVE!
LOOK OUT! HERE HE COMES!
THE MONSTER BRUSHES CAL ASIDE AND SEIZES CAROLINE!
HELP!
STOP!
HE OBEYED YOU CAL! HOW COME?
I MERELY IMITATED HIS MASTER'S VOICE!
BUT THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE IS SEALED UP!
PERHAPS- IF I GIVE ANOTHER IMITATION-
PULL THOSE ROCKS AWAY!
HE'S DOING IT. HEY! HE DOESN'T CARE WHERE HE THROWS 'EM!

A *Three Comrades* page, wherein Sherman warms up the style he'd soon be using on Dr. Fate. Copyright © 1940 Better Publications.

DAN SPIEGLE

A professional cartoonist for nearly forty years, Spiegle has yet to receive sufficient recognition or acclaim. He's prolific and dependable, yet he hasn't fallen into a predictable rut. The work he's doing today is even better and livelier than his work was a decade ago.

Spiegle has followed a pattern somewhat different from that of many comic book artists. He started with a nationally syndicated newspaper strip and then moved into comic books, reversing the usual order. And he has remained steadfastly in Southern California, away from the publishing center of Manhattan.

He was born in 1920, grew up in California, and studied art at the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles on the GI Bill. In 1949, while trying out for another art job, he found out that actor William Boyd was looking for an artist to draw a *Hopalong Cassidy* strip. The old Hoppy B movies, which the shrewd Boyd had bought all rights to, were one of the unexpected successes of early television. Hopalong Cassidy mania was starting to sweep the nation when a new half-hour TV show was launched in June 1949. The strip would be part of the ever-increasing merchandising of the cowboy hero. "I was very fortunate to find Bill Boyd in an agreeable mood," Spiegle has recalled. "He liked the way I drew horses, and he commented that it didn't matter how I drew him—I'd learn how through practice—as he considered horses the most important in a Western strip." Spiegle got the job and, at twenty-nine, found himself drawing a strip that was appearing in two hundred papers around the country. He did commendable work on the strip—he did learn how to draw Boyd—and experimented with layouts and techniques. For a time he got some very interesting effects with Craftint double-tone paper. The popularity of Hoppy was such that some papers ran the strip on a separate page and larger than any others. It made an impressive showcase for a young artist who'd been wondering, just months earlier, how he was going to get along after art school.

When new fads and new heroes supplanted Hopalong Cassidy, the strip was dropped. That was in 1955, and the following year Spiegle went to work for the Western publishing outfit. They had large editorial offices in Southern California and employed such West Coast cartoonists as Carl Barks, Alex Toth, and Jesse Marsh. While Hoppy was losing favor, cowboys in general continued to be hot. Spiegle went to work on such TV adaptations as *Maverick, Lawman, Rifleman,* and *Rawhide.* He became a regular with the company and over the next two decades drew *Spin and Marty, Sea Hunt, Green Hornet, Korak,* and *Space Family Robinson.* This last strip, done in collaboration with editor/writer Del Connell, struck the fancy of CBS. They turned it into a television show called *Lost in Space,* which first went on the air in 1965. Nobody at the network bothered to compensate Spiegle or his partner. "We were going to sue, but our lawyers cautioned against it," he once explained, "since we were doing so many comics based on their characters, and in the long run we would lose from the loss of business to them. So we adopted their title and added it to ours."

Had he left comics around this time, he might have justified *The World Encyclopedia of Comics'* appraisal of him—"a solid craftsman, unexciting but enjoyable." After Western, Spiegle worked at a variety of things, including *Scooby Doo* for Marvel's short run with Hanna-Barbera in the late 1970s. Then came the 1980s, and Spiegle started doing some of his boldest and most forceful work. Teamed with writer Mark Evanier, he took part in yet another revival of *Blackhawk.* The layouts, the staging, even the rendering on this new material were much stronger than anything Spiegle had done for the more sedate Western–Gold Key magazines. *Blackhawk* took another hiatus in 1984, when Spiegle, again in collaboration with Evanier, was actively involved with *Crossfire,* a book with a costumed hero considerably closer to reality than much of the competition. For this same publisher, Eclipse, he's also drawn *Whodunnit?* and a *Crossfire and Rainbow* miniseries. He's also recently drawn a revival of the *Secret Six* series for DC's *Action Comics Weekly.*

Despite the quality of his current output, Spiegle remains a sort of thinking man's cartoonist and he has yet to become a fan favorite. Nevertheless, he remains an artist well worth following.

OH, NO... NO!
HEY, BOSS-- DON'T WORRY! I'M ALIVE AND MY PARTNER...HE'S ALIVE, TOO!
THAT'S THE MOST NAUSEATING NEWS I'VE HEARD ALL DAY. LET'S MAKE LIKE A MINK RANCHER AND GET FUR!
JAY...
WELL? AREN'T YOU GOING TO DO SOMETHING?
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Crossfire and Rainbow meet the Marx brothers. Copyright © 1986 Mark Evanier and Dan Spiegle.

DAVE STEVENS

He's a contemporary favorite, but with one foot firmly in the past—chiefly the long-vanished 1930s and 1940s, when you could see a chapter of a slambang movie serial at every Saturday matinee and sneak a peek at photos of scantily clad models like Betty Page in the cheesecake magazines the local newsstand tried to display just out of your reach. Stevens has managed to build up a considerable following and earn a good deal of critical acclaim with a relatively small amount of published comic book work, and chiefly with a single feature—*The Rocketeer.* Thus far his collected works would make for a slim volume.

He was born in Southern California in 1955, "grew up in the wilds of Idaho and Oregon," and then returned to Southern California. He was interested in drawing from childhood onward. Soon after graduating from high school, Stevens was hired by Russ Manning to assist on *Tarzan.* In a 1983 interview Stevens said that, while working for Manning, he did "everything [Manning] didn't want to do and didn't have time to do. A lot of backgrounds, a lot of minor figures. He really didn't let me do Tarzan until the very end of my stint."

Stevens helped out on the *Tarzan* Sunday page and later on the graphic novels Manning was producing for the European market. "Then, in late 1976, I just got tired of doing the Tarzan stuff," he's said. "It was getting to be a real grind for me, to ink people when I would rather be penciling my own stuff." He quit and started freelancing. After trying unsuccessfully to get assignments from both Marvel and DC, he decided to go into commercial art. He worked at a variety of things, including doing storyboards for *Raiders of the Lost Ark.* An encounter with the Pacific Comics folks at a convention led to an invitation to submit a backup feature for their forthcoming *Starslayer* magazine. Stevens drew a picture of the Rocketeer, Pacific liked it, and gave him an okay to do a story. "I had no idea what I was going to write."

What Stevens came up with was a pleasing amalgam of old movie serials (especially a 1941 Republic epic titled *King of the Rocket Men*), kids' TV adventure shows (especially the 1950s gem *Commando Cody*), 1930s aviation movies, old pulp magazine yarns, wacky Hollywood architecture of days gone by, and fondly remembered cheesecake models in general, and the dark-haired Betty Page in particular. Nostalgia is important to his work, but it's a nostalgia for a period that ended years before he was born. In *Bravo for Adventure,* which deals with similar aspects of the 1930s, Alex Toth was aided by memory and affection. Stevens has to rely on research when he starts looking backward, but his affection for the Depression years of the 1930s seems equally strong.

In a 1987 *Comics Journal* interview, Stevens told Gary Groth that his earliest major influences were Steranko, Hal Foster, and Will Eisner. Later influences were Frazetta and Reed Crandall. Stevens didn't come across Crandall's work until he saw a few reprinted samples in the early 1970s—"And I thought, 'Man, this guy must be my surrogate father.' So I went back and tried to find a lot of Crandall work, but it was impossible, because I was in Idaho and Oregon, and who has Crandall comics up there?" While Stevens's patiently drawn yet lively pages show a stronger Frazetta and Crandall influence, his layouts and the moods he achieves show he's also learned from Steranko and Eisner.

Although pretty girls also play an important part in his work, Stevens says he's never been accused of being exploitive or denounced by feminists. Asked by Groth about his seeming preoccupation with cheesecake, he replied, "All I know is that I draw what I like. I like those images. I think I'm also taking delight in that I'm able to draw the female figure, because when I was a kid I could never draw one for the life of me."

The Rocketeer got an immediate and positive response, and became the costar of another new magazine, *Pacific Presents.* That publication lasted but four issues and folded when Pacific folded. Next the Rocketeer showed up in a book of his own published by Eclipse in 1984. And in 1985 all the material was gathered together to make a graphic novel. There has also been some Rocketeer merchandising, including postcards and T-shirts. Most recently Stevens has been at work on a new Rocketeer series for Comico. Part of the reason that there isn't more Rocketeer material is that Steven puts in a good deal of time drawing each page. "Dave isn't so much *slow* as he is *dedicated,"* says his friend and colleague Mark Evanier. "Dave would sooner see his grandmother spar with Larry Holmes than see a panel that wasn't perfect leave the Stevens drawing board. . . . That fans are always willing to wait . . . is a testimony to Dave's talent, dedication, and ability to draw perhaps the sexiest women in comics."

The bold colors and vivid figures of this cover are standard fare for Dave Stevens.
Copyright © 1984 Dave Stevens.

GEORGE STORM

He was a restless and somewhat elusive man who seems never to have courted fame. When he died in 1976, his obituary didn't make the wire services and the notice that ran in his hometown paper in Oklahoma failed to mention most of his cartooning credits. Yet during a professional career that began before World War I and continued for over a half-century, Storm racked up an impressive list of achievements. In the mid-1920s he drew *Phil Hardy,* one of the first adventure strips ever. He next created *Bobby Thatcher,* which by the early 1930s was one of the most popular newspaper strips in the country. Entering the burgeoning comic book business in the late 1930s, Storm worked for most of the major houses. Impressively versatile, he turned out everything from costumed superheroes to funny animals and was both the first artist to draw the avenging Hangman for MLJ and one of the first to do Bugs Bunny for Dell. The early 1940s found him taking over *The Adventures of Patsy* newspaper strip and also creating Buzzy for DC, a teenage character who competed successfully with Archie for several years.

George Storm was born in a small town in Arkansas in 1893 and grew up in a small town in Oklahoma. By the time he was in his teens, he was working for an Oklahoma weekly, but as a copy boy and not a cartoonist. Eventually he got a job as a reporter, at a salary of $8 per week, on the Chicago *Herald.* By 1919 he had headed West, working as a reporter for both the *Los Angeles Examiner* and the *San Francisco Chronicle.* "But my ambition to become a cartoonist remained with me and I aspired to become an editor and run my own cartoons on page one," he once said. "The editor of the San Francisco *Daily News* recognized the strategy and gave me a job as a cartoonist in self-defense." After five years of drawing local cartoons for the *News,* the restless Storm journeyed East to work for the *New York Mirror.*

In 1925 Storm encountered newspaperman and author Jay Jerome Williams. The result was a newspaper strip called *Phil Hardy,* a mixture of the pluck-and-luck success stories favored by Horatio Alger and the more contemporary thrills and perils offered in action movies and serials. After leaving the Williams stable, Storm set up in business with a boy adventurer of his own. *Bobby Thatcher* commenced in 1927, built up a substantial list of papers across the country, and lasted until 1937.

Storm's work first appeared in comic books early in 1939. It was a modest debut, with *All-American Comics* devoting just three pages to reprints of the defunct *Bobby Thatcher.* Storm graduated to original work late in the year, when he began doing the *Whip* for *Flash Comics.* The ubiquitous Storm next showed up in *Crash Comics* in the spring of 1940. This magazine, with its failure-prone title, lasted but five issues. Storm was in all five, along with such newcomers as Jack Kirby and Irwin Hasen. It was also in 1940 that he did his first artwork for the Archie folks. In the fourth issue of *Blue Ribbon Comics* (June 1940) he drew *Ty-Gor,* a strip about a lad raised in the jungle by a maternal tiger. He worked briefly on the newspaper strip *Joe Jinks,* then was back with MLJ in 1941, doing two features about boxers, *Kayo Ward* and the *St. Louis Kid.* He also cocreated the *Hangman.* Scripted by one Cliff Campbell, this was an exceptionally violent feature. The episodes dealt with impaling, strangling, and, to be sure, hanging. Storm stuck with this one for just four issues.

From there he went to work for Dell and drew *Bugs Bunny* in the newly launched *Looney Tunes & Merry Melodies.* In addition to the exploits of the Warner rabbit, he also did *Pat, Patsy & Pete.* This feature was a fantasy—one that Storm obviously had fun working on—about a pair of blond kids and a talking penguin. He drew it for six issues, creating undersea sequences rich with mermaids, monsters, buried treasure, and leering ghost pirates. One of the later artists to draw the feature was Walt Kelly.

Storm had a style entirely his own, and it is next to impossible to identify his predecessors or, for that matter, latter-day disciples. His drawing is quirky and full of energy; he often suggests more than he shows. Even when handling straight adventure stuff Storm is clearly a cartoonist and not an illustrator. His anatomy may be a bit off, but the people and the animals all move and have life.

For the remainder of his comic book career Storm stuck with funny stuff. He produced numerous one-page fillers, most of them unsigned, for DC and Fawcett. Late in 1943 Storm came up with *Buzzy* for DC's *All Funny.* Buzzy, a peabrained fellow who played jive trumpet, was closer in many ways to the Harold Teen of a decade or so before than he was to contemporary youths, but it didn't seem to matter. Kids liked him. In the fall of 1944 a *Buzzy* magazine appeared. Storm drew the covers and most of the contents for the first few issues, then just the covers for the next few. The title itself continued until 1958.

The last comic strip he worked on was *The Adventures of Patsy,* which he took over in December 1942 and stayed with until April 1944. After that he went home to Enid, Oklahoma, and remained there for the rest of his life. He tried advertising, gag cartooning, and illustrating. His last nationally seen work appeared in the early 1950s in a less-than-prestigious humor digest called *Charley Jones's Laugh Book.*

THIS IS PRETTY BAD!!
FROM HERE ON IT GETS WORSE, MISTER.
WE'VE BEEN GOING TWO HOURS, DRIVER! ...BY THE MAP, IT'S ONLY TWENTY MILES, AS THE CROW FLIES..
THIS JALOPY DONT FLY, MISTER!
2
WE'LL HAVE TO HOOF IT THE REST OF THE WAY.... HE SAYS IT'LL BE DARK BEFORE WE GET THERE....
3
HELP!!
HOLY CATS!
LISSEN, SCOOP! I'VE GOT PNEUMONIA AND A SPRAINED ANKLE FROM FALLIN' OUTA THAT CAR!
WELL - PUT 'EM ON YOUR EXPENSE ACCOUNT-WE'VE GOTTA KEEP GOIN!
2

A blend of comedy and adventure in Storm's *Scoop Hanlon* from *Whirlwind Comics*.
Copyright © 1940 Nita Publications.

CURT SWAN

Although he has had to follow in the footsteps of other artists on established characters, Swan has managed to develop an individual and much admired style of his own. There are, in fact, many fans and comics historians who consider him the definitive Superman artist. He went to work for DC Comics in 1945 and is still there; he first drew Superman in the 1950s and is still drawing him.

Curtis Douglas Swan was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1920. He studied art at the Pratt Institute in New York, but he owes his art career to the U.S. Army. His National Guard unit was activated in 1941 and Swan eventually found himself in Ireland. While putting his art training to use by painting murals in a Red Cross club, he met fellow GI Dick Wingert. Wingert, now a successful comic strip artist, suggested Swan try for a job on *Stars and Stripes,* the service newspaper. After landing a job, Swan spent two years in London—"I was doing mapwork, cartoons, some lettering, illustrations, a variety of things"—and was then sent to Paris.

After the war, Swan applied for work at DC at the suggestion of a former *Stars and Stripes* colleague, writer France Herron. Swan was put to work almost at once, his first assignment being *Boy Commandos* for *Detective Comics.* The feature had been created by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, a tough act to follow, and Swan's initial efforts were a bit stiff and ill at ease. But he was quite good at learning as he went along.

Swan went on to work on such DC characters as the Newsboy Legion, Tommy Tomorrow, Jimmy Olsen, Superboy, Supergirl, and Batman. After warming up on various members of the family—and after doing a 3-D Superman comic book—Swan graduated to the position of chief Superman artist. Basically a penciler, Swan has worked with an assortment of inkers. The period in the 1960s and 1970s when he was teamed up with Murphy Anderson is highly regarded. DC itself, in the 1982 promotional booklet *Fifty Who Made DC Great,* stated that the team "produced the most popular and recognizable Superman ever." Comics historians Will Jacobs and Gerald Jones have said, "The art . . . was the best of Superman's long career; with Anderson's precise finishing, Swan was able to display his new facility for bold, dynamic 'modern' layouts."

Swan feels that one of the things he did was make the Man of Steel more human. "We wanted people to relate to him better," he's said, "so we gave him personality. For example, Clark Kent and Superman react differently to different characters and situations. When Clark speaks to Lois Lane, he's shy and looks uncomfortable. On the other hand, showing Superman overcoming a tough scrape demonstrates his strength. When you deal with a character over a long period of time, you discover many aspects of his individuality—he becomes real. That's what happened to Superman."

Swan has looked outside comics for his inspiration. "The ones I looked up to are the old magazine artists, the illustrators," he once told *Comics Journal.* "Al Parker was one, Jon Whitcomb . . . Howard Brodie was one I admired so much, and Harold von Schmidt." His work has never settled down into being predictable and he's always changing—"anybody in the art field—you're always learning."

While the arrival of John Byrne on the Superman scene a few years ago curtailed Swan's involvement, he continues to be actively engaged with the character. He played a vital part in the recent celebration of Superman's fiftieth birthday.

YOUNG MAN... I NEED YOUR HELP... DESPERATELY!
IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH-- MY OWN!
SUPERMAN--?! NO!--IT'S JUST A STREET BUM DRESSED IN A SUPERMAN SUIT!
AND WHAT'S EVEN MORE FAR OUT--
--EXCEPT FOR A FEW DAYS' GROWTH OF BEARD... THE GUY'S A DEAD RINGER FOR THE REAL SUPERMAN!
PLEASE... YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE ME! I'VE LOST MOST OF MY SUPER-POWERS...
...AND UNTIL I CAN FIND A WAY TO RESTORE THEM, MY LIFE IS IN DEADLY PERIL!
WHEW! NOT ONLY DOES HE LOOK AND DRESS LIKE THE BIG S...
PLEASE... IT SEEMS MY MEMORY HAS BEEN BADLY DISORIENTED BY THE SAME JOLT THAT CRIPPLED MY POWERS!
SO MUCH OF METROPOLIS SEEMS STRANGE... ALIEN TO ME!
I MUST BE SUFFERING FROM PARTIAL AMNESIA!
...IT APPEARS THE POOR GUY ACTUALLY BELIEVES HE IS THE MAN OF STEEL!
I THOUGHT I'D SEEN AND HEARD ALL THE ORIGINAL RAPS USED FOR ASKING FOR HANDOUTS--
--BUT THIS ONE WINS THE GRAND PRIZE!
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY HE DOESN'T SEEM TO RECOGNIZE ME! AFTER ALL, SUPERMAN AND I HAVE MET A FEW--
WAIT! WHAT AM I THINKING?
THE GUY'S OBVIOUSLY A LOONY TUNE AND HERE I AM THINKING HE'S FOR REAL!

Curt Swan draws the impossible easily as he depicts Superman on Skid Row.
Copyright © 1984 DC Comics, Inc.

FRANK THOMAS

He was one of those versatile Golden Age cartoonists who drew everything from superheroes to funny animals. In fact, Thomas has the distinction of being the only artist who simultaneously turned out the adventures of a costumed crimefighter and a humor feature starring a couple of bumblebees.

Franklyn Thomas entered the comic book field in the late 1930s. He worked mostly for the Centaur line—*Amazing Man Comics, Keen Detective Funnies,* and others—and wrote and drew all of his features. He once recalled that he never got any creative input from Centaur. "The editors and publishers of those early books seemed to be promoters and businessmen rather than creative types," he said. "They chose the features they felt would sell and the mad rush to beat their competition to the newsstands left little time for quibbling over detail."

Thomas's earliest feature was *Chuck Hardy,* a fantasy adventure opus that shared *Amazing Man Comics* with Bill Everett's title character, Carl Burgos's Iron Skull, and an assortment of other somewhat unorthodox heroes. Chuck Hardy, a stalwart, square-jawed fellow, hung out in Aquatania, also known as the Land Beneath the Sea. It was a jungle fantasyland inhabited by sorcerers, frogmen, swampmen, giant turtles, and other hazards.

Chuck gave way to *Dr. Hypno* with the fourteenth issue (July 1940). The doctor had a rather unusual knack—"By hypnosis, he is able to transfer his powerful mentality to the body of any lower living form! Thus, in the guise of a dog, cat, or bird," Hypno pursued a sideline as a detective and a crimebuster. In the course of his investigations Dr. Hypno transposed his mind into some fairly unlikely host bodies, including those of a parrot, a gorilla, a bat, an organ-grinder's monkey, and an elephant. Thomas drew all these creatures in a cartoony style that probably didn't give Jack Kirby or Will Eisner any pangs of envy. But it had a charm all its own, and you can tell he was having fun depicting all this melodrama and mayhem. Thomas also developed a penchant for cinematic layouts. He was especially fond of the overhead downshot, a setup much favored by such movie directors as Busby Berkeley.

Beyond a doubt, Thomas's most unusual character—quite possibly the most unusual in early comics—was the Eye. He, or maybe it, appeared in *Keen Detective* from late 1939 until late 1940. Not only didn't the Eye have a civilian identity, he didn't even have a body. Living up to his name, he was nothing else but an eye—albeit an enormous, impressive one with the ability to fly and hover. When the Eye looked at you, you paid attention. He could expand and shrink, and besides sending bolts of fire and power rays, he was capable of projecting a searchlight beam. He was able to materialize just about anyplace, high in the sky to strike an escaping villain's airship with a bolt of fire out of his pupil or in a cemetery at midnight to discourage grave robbers. *"Crime and Punishment* gave me the idea for the Eye," Thomas once explained, "which was really a symbol of the wrongdoer's conscience."

In summer 1940 Thomas signed up exclusively with Dell. "I remember Helen Meyer at Dell looked at my portfolio and sent me to Oskar Lebeck at Western Printing and Lithography, then at 200 Fifth Avenue. He created, hired the artists and writers, edited and printed the Dell comics," Thomas said. "Here the procedure was different than I had before experienced. . . . Oskar usually sparked the original feature idea, then called in the artist/writer he felt was best suited for it." Thomas credited Lebeck with coming up with the idea for the Owl, his best-known and most successful comic book feature.

The Owl began in the June 1940 issue of *Crackajack Funnies,* drawn by another artist. Thomas took over the following month. Soon after the Owl was promoted to the star position and was showcased on each and every cover. The Owl, billed as a "scourge of the forces of evil and darkness," went after a series of bizarre master criminals—folks like a hooded saboteur named Thor, an emperor of crime known as the Panther, and a family of crazed killers and terrorists who palled around with a rather gentle gorilla who wore slacks, a sportcoat, and a polka dot bowtie. After the collapse of *Crackajack,* the Owl set up shop over at *Popular Comics.*

Thomas also drew *Billy & Bonnie Bee* for *New Funnies* and later scripted several of Dell's funny animal features. He drew a few newspaper strips for smaller syndicates and, in 1955, began a ten-year stretch ghosting the popular pantomime strip *Ferd'nand.* He died in the mid-1960s.

THE OWL

SOON THE OLD ROAD LEADING TO THE MORGAN MANSE IS CHOKED WITH POLICE CARS AND MOTORCYCLES, AS THE CHIEF RETURNS FROM THE CITY WITH HIS MEN!
POLICE
POLICE
WE'LL SHOW THE OWL WHETHER WE CAN HANDLE THIS SITUATION OR NOT, EH, O'TOOLE?-I'VE ARRANGED WITH THE ARMY FOR BOMBERS TO BE SENT FROM KITCHELL FIELD!!
BOY!
LEAVE THE CARS HERE, MEN, AND SURROUND THE OLD MORGAN PLACE -THE ARMY BOMBERS WILL BE HERE ANY MINUTE-IF THE BOMBS DON'T GET THE MAD MADESPOS, WE WILL!
FROM THE ROOF OF THE MADESPO HOUSE-
THE CHIEF'S BACK WITH PRACTICALLY THE WHOLE FORCE-NOW THERE'LL BE THE DEUCE TO PAY! -WHY CAN'T HE LISTEN-HSS-SST!
-DO I HEAR AIRPLANES?
ARMY BOMBERS!-THE CHIEF HAS GONE CRAZY MAD!! — I HOPE THOSE PILOTS KNOW THAT THE MADESPOS HAVE ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY!!
WHAT'S THIS?-ANOTHER SHIP-A SMALL ONE -COMING FROM THE NORTH!
-WHY-IT'S MY OWN-IT'S THE OWLPLANE!! -IT MUST BE BELLE-AND SHE'S FLYING LOW!
-BELLE!-GO BACK-GO BACK!!
-ANTI-AIRCRAFT!!
-OH!-WHAT A MESS!

Thomas is in a relatively serious mood in this cinematic Owl page from *Crakajack Funnies*. Copyright © 1941 K.K. Publications, Inc.

JIMMY THOMPSON

Thompson was a man who loved to draw Indians. He began his life in comic books doing just that, but over the next fifteen or so years he did everything from serious superheroes to comedy cowboys. Thompson managed to work for most of the major companies, including DC, Fawcett, and Marvel. He was about the only Golden Age artist to draw not only the Human Torch but Sub-Mariner and the Angel as well. He also worked on Mary Marvel and drew the definitive Robotman.

Although he was fondest of stories set in the outdoors and the West, Thompson had an appealing way of drawing urban adventures. His cities are full of dark alleys and odd skyscrapers. While he was capable of working in the illustrative dry-bush style championed by artists like Alex Raymond, he seemed to prefer a lighter, more lushly inked approach. Probably the best examples of this latter approach are to be found in the many Robotman stories he drew. In these he achieved just the right mix of the humorous and the straight, a blend that suited the not-quite-serious exploits of the celebrated metallic detective.

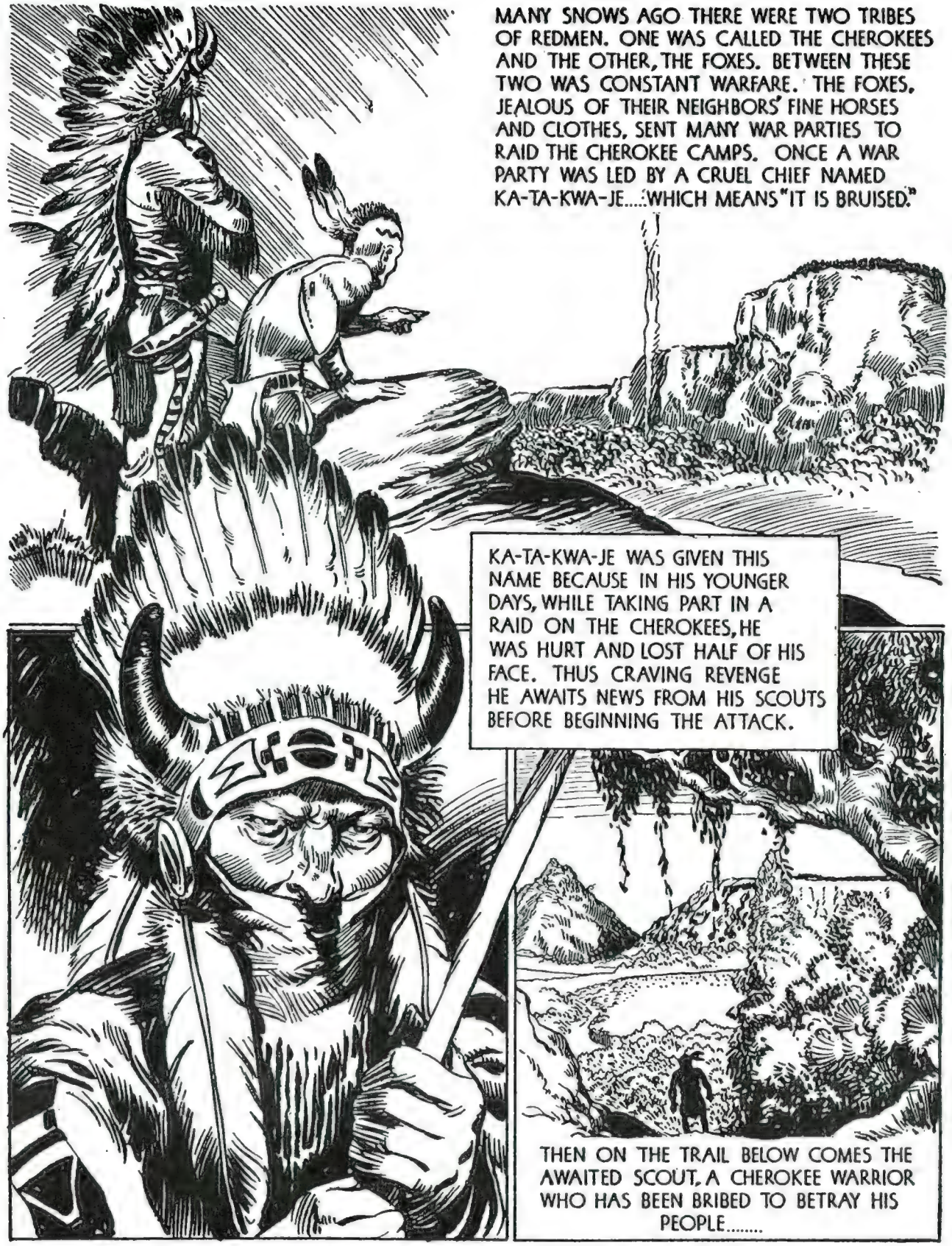
Apparently based in the Philadelphia area, Thompson worked for that city's Ledger Syndicate for several years in the 1930s. In the summer of 1937 he inherited *War on Crime.* This daily newspaper strip, which dealt with the exploits of the FBI in tracking down such celebrity public enemies as Dillinger, Pretty Boy Floyd, and Ma Barker, had the personal approval of J. Edgar Hoover. It folded in January 1938. Late that same year Thompson was back in the funny papers, drawing the venerable *Hairbreadth Harry.* After *Harry* became defunct, Thompson next drew *Roy Powers, Eagle Scout* in the wake of the formidable Frank Godwin. Either because of modesty or syndicate policy he never signed any of these strips.

During these same years Jimmy Thompson also started drawing for comic books, initially for the Philadelphia publisher David McKay. For *King Comics,* which was mostly dedicated to reprinting King Features such as *Popeye, Flash Gordon,* and *Mandrake,* he drew *Redmen.* Laid out like a Sunday page, it ran in the exact middle of each issue and dealt with a Mohawk brave named Black Hawk. Filled with faithfully rendered details about Indian life and lore, *Redmen* was without a trace of cowboys-and-Indians hokum in its early years. Thompson dealt with conflicts among tribes and mixed in Indian magic and folktales. Black Hawk was shown as a man of skill and intelligence who could speak without sounding like Tonto or a movie Injun. When *Magic Comics* got going in the summer of 1939, Thompson provided a similar feature called *Indian Lore.* His magnum opus was *Red Eagle,* an ambitious sixty-four-page black-and-white comic published in the summer of 1938. It chronicled the adventures of a young Cherokee brave, mixing action, Indian legends, fantasy, and romance.

In the early 1940s Thompson branched out. For *Shadow Comics* he drew the exploits of a boy detective named Danny Garrett; and for *Heroic Comics* he did Music Master, a superhero who possessed the dubious ability of being able to turn into music. Marvel kept him busy with Human Torch, Angel, and Sub-Mariner. Thompson floundered with the aquatic hero, giving his odd-shaped head an odder shape than ever before.

Thompson's finest hour in the 1940s was with Robotman. Several other artists had drawn the metal man before him. His first effort appeared in *Star-Spangled Comics* #26 (November 1943). With issue #29 he introduced Robbie the Robotdog. Built by Robotman, the mechanical sleuth hound was initially a polite and sedate creature. After a hiatus of a few issues, however, Robbie came back in slightly altered form. Besides a dog suit to wear as a disguise over his metal body on certain occasions, he had a new personality. Feisty and vain, he now read Sherlock Holmes and assured his metal master that he was a crack investigator himself. Once Thompson had his basic team he went on to produce a long string of attractive-looking, entertaining Robotman yarns. He drew the character throughout its run in *Star-Spangled,* which ended in #82 (July 1948) and stuck with Robotman when he moved into *Detective Comics.*

While working for DC, Thompson got to draw the West again, but not in the same way he had on *Redmen.* For the bimonthly *All Funny Comics* he did *Two-Gun Percy,* a not-exactly-hilarious cowboy spoof. Much more serious was *Rodeo Rick,* produced for *Western Comics.* Thompson also drew Western and true crime stuff for some of the Avon comics in the early 1950s. By the middle of the decade, his work was no longer to be seen.


MANY SNOWS AGO THERE WERE TWO TRIBES OF REDMEN. ONE WAS CALLED THE CHEROKEES AND THE OTHER, THE FOXES. BETWEEN THESE TWO WAS CONSTANT WARFARE. THE FOXES, JEALOUS OF THEIR NEIGHBORS' FINE HORSES AND CLOTHES, SENT MANY WAR PARTIES TO RAID THE CHEROKEE CAMPS. ONCE A WAR PARTY WAS LED BY A CRUEL CHIEF NAMED KA-TA-KWA-JE....WHICH MEANS "IT IS BRUISED."
KA-TA-KWA-JE WAS GIVEN THIS NAME BECAUSE IN HIS YOUNGER DAYS, WHILE TAKING PART IN A RAID ON THE CHEROKEES, HE WAS HURT AND LOST HALF OF HIS FACE. THUS CRAVING REVENGE HE AWAITS NEWS FROM HIS SCOUTS BEFORE BEGINNING THE ATTACK.
THEN ON THE TRAIL BELOW COMES THE AWAITED SCOUT, A CHEROKEE WARRIOR WHO HAS BEEN BRIBED TO BETRAY HIS PEOPLE.....

Thompson's handsome rendering of his favorite topic. Copyright © 1938 David McKay Company.

OGDEN WHITNEY

Fame and fortune always eluded Whitney. An excellent artist, much admired by his contemporaries, he never achieved either the celebrity or the income of Jack Kirby. He produced his best work in the 1940s and 1950s, drawing everything from superheroes to crimebusters. In the 1960s he made something of a comeback with the unorthodox hero Herbie and then gradually faded away. He was highly talented and also apparently highly self-destructive; that latter trait eventually won out and ended his career.

He was born in 1918 and began his professional career in 1939 at DC, drawing for *Adventure Comics.* He did *Cotton Carver,* about a blond gentleman adventurer who experienced some lively times in a lost world beneath the surface of the Earth; and the *Sandman*—the old, original version of this recurring hero—the fellow with the gas gun, gas mask, slouch hat, business suit, and cape. Both were written by the prolific Gardner Fox. When editor Vincent Sullivan left DC in 1940 to start *Big Shot Comics,* Whitney went along. Teaming up with Fox, they created *Skyman.*

Where would comic books have been without wealthy playboys who were driven both by boredom and a sense of justice to become phantom avengers? More important, where would Gardner Fox have been? He was especially fond of the concept of the seemingly lazy man-about-town who is secretly a masked champion of right, and he'd already used it for Sandman. In this instance, it was rich playboy Allan Turner, who converted to Skyman by donning a distinctive red, white, and blue costume—somewhat resembling a souped-up polo uniform—and took off in the Wing, a super airship of his own invention. Skyman occupied the leading position in early issues, and quite obviously Sullivan considered him the potential star of the magazine.

Though Whitney's work was a bit reserved and mild mannered at first, he soon loosened up. He became very good at depicting the airborne action required in Skyman's battles against various foreign invaders, mad inventors, and just plain crooks. Whitney also became good at something even more difficult than showing the figure in action. That was drawing it in repose. He grew increasingly preoccupied with this, and soon people were to be seen sitting, leaning, slouching, and sprawling all over his pages. Another problem he solved for himself was how to suggest that a body had weight.

In 1944 the artist started signing himself Cpl. Ogden Whitney. Apparently he was drawing while on leave, for eventually his work ceased showing up at all. Whitney returned to the feature in *Big Shot* #67 (July 1946). His comeback was announced with a blurb on the cover and, inside, a typeset intro to his six-page story—"Big Shot Comics is happy to announce the return of OGDEN WHITNEY to its fine art staff. After drawing Skyman for four years, Ogden enlisted in the U.S. Army. Now, back from the Pacific War Zone with a chestful of campaign ribbons and an honorable discharge, Ogden has settled down to the task of offering our readers the finest quality in comic strip entertainment."

It was a different Whitney who had come back. His work was much more lushly inked, had a slightly cartoony look, and was much more candid in its approach to women. Cleavage and raised skirts were much more in evidence, and Fawn's bosom had miraculously enlarged. Still an expert at figure drawing, Whitney was leaning strongly toward what later came to be called Good Girl Art. The Skyman expired with #101 (May 1949). *Big Shot* itself lasted for just three more issues beyond that.

Sullivan had left in 1947 to form his own publishing company, Magazine Enterprises. Many postwar comics, especially the new titles, were aimed at a somewhat older audience. ME's *Manhunt* dealt in crime, and Whitney drew two features for it in his realistic, more sophisticated postwar manner. Both *Fallon of the FBI* and *Undercover Girl* show Whitney's interest in movies. He makes use of long shots, boom shots, closeups, and other cinematic devices. And Starr Flagg, his lady undercover agent, was a dead ringer for Lizabeth Scott, a husky-voiced, disdainfully sultry actress of the time.

Whitney continued to be active in comics throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. He was at his most productive for the American Comics Group, and was frequently seen in *Adventures into the Unknown* and *Forbidden Worlds.* His drawing started to slip badly in these years; his pages looked stiff and hurried. In 1964 ACG brought forth *Herbie,* a comic book featuring an obnoxious, pudgy little boy named Herbie Popnecker who became a mock superhero called Fat Fury. Herbie attracted a following and stayed in business for three years. At the same time Whitney was doing work for Marvel on *Nick Fury, Millie the Model,* and other features. His last fling was with Tower's T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents series, where he drew such strips as *NoMan.*

Whitney's work had continued to decline and in the late 1960s he left the field. Jerry DeFuccio, one-time associate editor at *Mad* and dedicated comics historian, called on Whitney just before that. "Whitney wasn't anything like the svelte characters he used to draw," he's said. "Fat and obviously addicted to liquor." According to DeFuccio, Whitney, who apparently had been an alcoholic for several years, grew even worse after the death of his wife. It's believed that by the early 1970s he was dead.

IF FAWN CARROLL COULD ONLY SEE HER WONDERFUL SKYMAN NOW -- WEARING THE UNIFORM OF A GESTAPO CAPTAIN! BUT MY OWN OUTFIT'S TOO WELL KNOWN!
THE JOB I HAVE TO DO CALLS FOR SUBTLETY -- AND SO I MUST WEAR WOLF'S CLOTHING!
BLACK NAZI PIG! MEET YOUR DEATH!
SORRY, MY FRIEND!
YOU, DOG! I KILL YOU!
I HATE TO DO THIS TO A MAN WHO LIKES TO KILL NAZIS, BUT --!
"THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES --!"
YOU NAZI DEVIL!
TONI! PEPPI! TEAR HIM TO PIECES!
2

A good example of Whitney's figure work. That's Skyman being mistaken for a Nazi pig. Copyright © 1943 Columbia Comic Corp.

MARY WILSHIRE

Even though one of the high spots of her career thus far has been drawing *Red Sonja,* Mary Wilshire doesn't consider herself a specialist in depicting barbarians or much of an enthusiast of the swords and sorcery sort of comic book. In fact, until she was offered the book in the mid-1980s, she'd never even seen a comic book featuring the She Devil with a Sword. Wilshire hadn't looked at much Conan either.

While growing up, she wasn't a comic book fan. Except for magazines like *Mad,* she got most of her inspiration from newspaper funnies and animated cartoons. Among her artistic influences she lists Jack Davis, Stan Drake, Alex Kotzky, and Chuck Jones—cartoonists she considers experts at drawing people, telling stories, and staging action.

She was born in New Jersey in 1953 and studied at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute, planning to be a commercial artist of some sort. She got into comics by way of the undergrounds. She had four pages in the second, and last, issue of *Wet Satin* in 1978. The comic was edited by Trina Robbins and dedicated to "Women's Erotic Fantasies." Wilshire was a contributor to *Young Lust* and *After Shock* and also had material in *Titters: The First Collection of Humor by Women,* an anthology put together by Anne Beatts, Deanne Stillman, and Judy Belushi. About 1980 she started contributing funny stuff to Marvel's *Crazy,* a then-surviving *Mad* impersonator.

After *Crazy* collapsed, Wilshire was invited to try her hand at *Red Sonja.* Larry Hama, whom she'd worked with on *Crazy,* was the editor who suggested she take over the Sonja book. "I didn't know anything about Red Sonja," Wilshire explained recently. "All I saw was that they had a sexy woman character for me to draw. And that was something I could get into." Basically, she says, she thought of Sonja as a tragic character, a strong and attractive woman at odds with her society. Wilshire's fondness for the character was somewhat different from that of her predecessors, such as Frank Thorne, and she interpreted the character differently. Her layouts were less complex, more straightforward. She tended to concentrate on what she likes to do best—draw people.

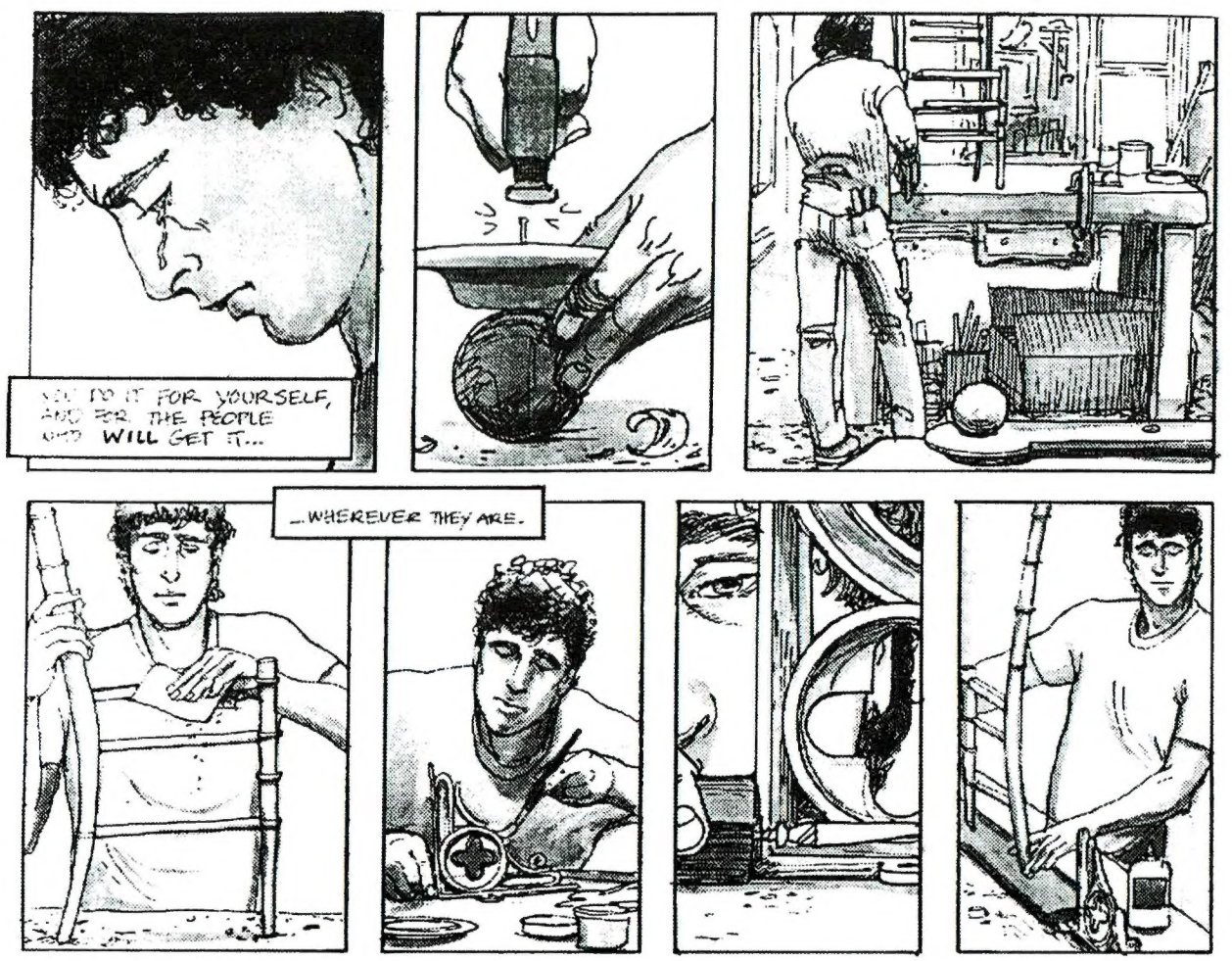
Wilshire says that "the kind of stuff I like to do is based on real, contemporary situations, involving normal everyday people. I like soap opera, too." While at Marvel, however, she was not actively involved with everyday reality. After Sonja came such titles as *Power Pack, Ka-Zar, Spider-Man,* and *New Mutants*—the latter with Bill Sienkiewicz's inking. "There are places where you can see the clash of our styles," she was quoted as saying in *Marvel Age,* "and other places where he brings an articulation to my pencils that I haven't seen from any other inker." Wilshire also drew a four-book miniseries devoted to *Firestar,* a lady superperson taken from the "Spidey" television show. In an interview done while she was working on *Firestar,* Wilshire explained how she approached a story. "When I do the breakdowns, I don't just do layouts," she said. "I try to get into the story as though I were making a film. I try to imagine how I would direct the actors and how they would respond. I try to plan my shots carefully. I get involved with the storytelling and I do this through the acting of the characters."

Wilshire currently divides her time between commercial art and comics. She's drawn two contemporary stories for Renegade's romance book and she'd like to do more of that. She has worked on a proposal for a graphic novel, using pastels, that would be "about men and women's relationships in New York City in the 1980s." She is also doing a series of portraits, in comic book style, of noted wrestlers. These are used in merchandising by the World Wrestling Federation. When asked if she actually said, as quoted in *Marvel Age,* "I'm just a regular girl who likes to tell a good story," Wilshire thought for a moment and then replied that she probably had.

BAM!
IT'S DAMNED EXPENSIVE — PERSONAL VISION... EVEN WHILE YOU'RE ACTUALLY EXERCISING IT YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL NEVER GET IT. SOMETIMES IT HURTS SO MUCH....
WHY EVEN BOTHER.

Artheart

written & drawn by Mary Wilshire



In "Artheart," Mary Wilshire depicts the love of fine craftsmanship that she herself demonstrates in her fine work. Copyright © 1988 Mary Wilshire.

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THE FIRST VOLUME OF **THE GREAT COMIC BOOK ARTISTS** WAS ACCLAIMED AS "A LIVELY AND WELL-INFORMED DISCUSSION OF THE FIELD'S SEMINAL PRACTITIONERS FROM THE '30S TO THE PRESENT" (*NEW YORK DAILY NEWS*). *SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE* CALLED IT "AMUSING AND INTERESTING," AND *THE COMIC BUYERS GUIDE* SAID THAT IT "BELONGS IN EVERY COMIC BOOK COLLECTOR'S LIBRARY." IN THIS MUCH-DEMANDED SEQUEL, **RON GOULART** PRESENTS 56 MORE ESSAYS ON COMIC ART SUPERSTARS, EACH ILLUSTRATED WITH A HANDSOME FULL-PAGE SAMPLE OF THE ARTIST'S WORK. FEATURED ARE SUCH GOLDEN AGE GREATS AS **CARL BURGOS**, **JACK BURNLEY**, **CREIG FLESSEL**, **FRED KIDA**, AND **PAUL MURRY**; TIMELESS ARTISTS SUCH AS **MURPHY ANDERSON**, **WILL ELDER**, **IRWIN HANSEN**, **DAN SPIEGLE**, AND **CURT SWAN**; UNCATEGORIZABLE ARTISTS LIKE **SERGIO ARAGONES**, **R. CRUMB**, AND **JEAN GIRAUD (MOEBIUS)**; AND, OF COURSE, A SELECTION OF TODAY'S HOTTEST TALENTS INCLUDING **ARTHUR ADAMS**, **STEVE BISSETTE**, **BRIAN BOLLAND**, **DAVE GIBBONS**, AND **MIKE GRELL**.

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